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FANTASTIC FILMS

The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction in the Cinema

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FIRST REPORT
on the NEW

SUPERMAN MOVIES



The
ALIEN LANGUAGE
of

Close Encounters

TRANSLATED

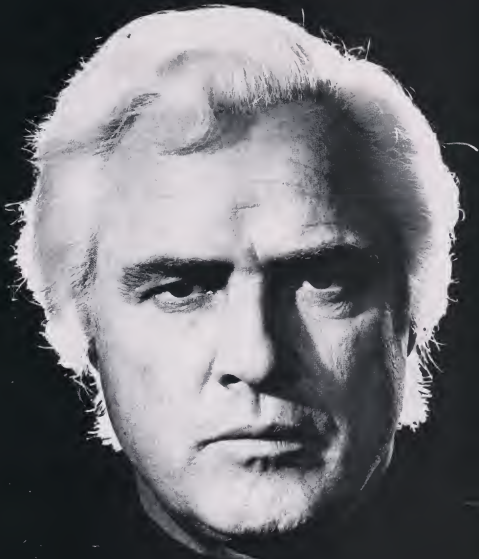
Mothership Architecture



The Language of CE1K



KAL-EL's powers *Explained* • Superman's TRUE Origins *Revealed* •
CARTOONS of the 40's • TV of the 50's • KIRK ALYN INTERVIEWED •
SUPERBOY • SUPERPUP • The Daily Planet



IRV KARCHMAR/EDITOR & PUBLISHER • MICHAEL STEIN/ART DIRECTOR & ASSOCIATE EDITOR • MICHAEL KRUEGER/ART DIRECTOR • JAMES L. SPURLOCK/PRODUCTION CONSULTANT • JERRY NEELEY/ASSOCIATE EDITOR • TAUNA LE MARBE/ALIEN LINGUISTICS EDITOR • DIL J. ALLEN HYNEN/ASTRONOMICAL ADVISOR • JOAN BLEDIG, E.G. SUNDEN/COPY EDITORS

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Contents

4 REACTION

planetary missives

6 MOTHERSHIP ARCHITECTURE

a 'sky harbor' may be in your future
PICTORIAL ESSAY
by Michael Stein and Clyde Jones



20 FIRST REPORT OF THE NEW SUPERMAN MOVIES

it is more than you could imagine
PREVIEW by Mike Gold

45 THE ANIMATED KRYPTONIAN

in many ways, more interesting than his present saturday morning image
ARTICLE by Eric Hoffman

48 THE MAN OF STEEL VS. THE CATHODE RAY

even superman could not quite overcome his video image
ARTICLE by Irv Karchmar

50 SUPERBEINGS THAT ALMOST WERE

superboy and superpup

51 BUBBLEGUM FLASHBACKS

a 50's trading card gallery

52 THE TRUE ORIGINS OF SUPERMAN

the powers that be are not the powers that were
ARTICLE by Alex Eisenstein



55 THE DAILY PLANET

from the 'front page' era of yellow journalism to the modern age
ARTICLE by Terry Parker

62 FAN SCENE

of confusion pi and other things



12 THE ALIEN LANGUAGE OF CE3K TRANSLATED

of colors, words, and the music of thought
LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS
by Tauna Le Marbe

16 KIRK ALYN INTERVIEWED

the superman of the 40's serials is also in the new movie
INTERVIEW by Jerry Neeley



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CORRECTIONS

Your premiere issue of FANTASTIC FILMS is admittedly an impressive one, but several errors cropped up in your interview material with Jon Berg, Phil Tippett, and Rick Baker. These people are friends of mine.

RE: "LET THE WOOKIE WIN." First off, John's name is spelled Jon. He was the Jolly Green Giant, but only as an insert of his ankles and hands. The fellow standing in the miniature set was an actor who died several years ago and whose features were used for the logo of the Giant in advertising. Dennis Moren is Dennis Muren (obviously a typo; you got it right the second time around). David Allen did not "direct" THE CRATER LAKE MONSTER; rather, he designed and directed the composite stop-motion effects.

RE: RICK BAKER: Again John Berg is Jon Berg, and there is no such film person as Phil Hoeg. You have apparently confused two names: Bill Hedge, who did some work on FLESH GORDON, and Phil Tippett, who did do some masks for the Cantina. One



gentleman that should be mentioned with regard to the Cantina is Laine Liska, an excellent stop-motion animator, who contributed four aliens to the barroom in STAR WARS. Unfortunately, his name was omitted from the credits. Just how how did your associate editor get the impression that Doug Beswick was "an animator for LAND OF THE LOST and SCHLOCK?" Who said there was any animation in SCHLOCK??? (At least, that's what your parenthetical statement implied.) Ron Cobb is Ron Cobb.

Errors are bound to crop up when a tape session goes through the alpha-

bet filter, I know. This note is merely meant to straighten it all out.

Paul Mandell
Brooklyn, New York

EDITORS NOTE: Thank you very much for your corrections. We meant to mention them in this issue and apologize for them.

We also inadvertently put a question as part of an answer, and made it appear that Rick Baker said that George Lucas was unhappy with Stuart Freeborn's aliens. Actually, it was a question the interviewer asked (line 16, column 1, page 11). We apologize for any misunderstanding it may have caused.

COMMENTS NOTED

Recently I was at the newsstand picking up my usual pile of comics and magazines. Having just seen the film the night before, I was looking for some good stuff on CE3K. Scanning the racks, I muttered a deprecatory remark concerning the trashy and exploitative nature of most of the magazines and poster books rushed out to cash in on the recent "sci-fi craze". The stranger next to me showed me a magazine he said some people he knew were putting out. Obviously I bought it or I wouldn't be writing you now.

Okay, let's look at each feature individually first.

Something has to be done about the cover. You can do without at least half the blurbs. We can read that stuff on the contents page. I like seeing a photo on the cover but one is enough. Actually, it was all that clutter that made me overlook FF on the newsstand in the first place. It blends right in with the aforementioned rip-off books.

The articles in this issue can be best described by the 'three I's: Informative, Imaginative, and Interesting.' They covered each subject without having to rehash a lot of old material, something rare in this type of publication lately.

The photos complemented the articles perfectly. Keep putting in the original movie posters.

The poster is the worst part of the

book. Get rid of it. Besides being a rotten poster anyway, it greatly detracts from the general high quality of the book and I hate to unstaple magazines.

I don't want to talk about Xeno.

In all, I'd say FANTASTIC FILMS is well worth the \$2 I paid for it. It has the slick, intelligent atmosphere of CINÉFANTASTIQUE and the youthful enthusiasm of FAMOUS MONSTERS.

Brian Thomas
Hampshire, Ill.

STOCK KUDOS

Today, I bought a copy of FANTASTIC FILMS, April 1978 issue. What attracted me to it was the section on *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. I must



tell you what an excellent article it was—especially the article *TDTESS: The Film and the Times* written by Jay Stock. I particularly loved the ending. "Gort? Klatu? Dammit, where are you?" It was fantastic and it really hit home. I had just seen *TDTESS* the night before and think it is one of the greatest SF films of all time (if not THE best). We certainly could use Gort or Klatu around to remind us how foolish it is to "play around" with nuclear weapons. I also enjoyed *The Language of Klatu* by Tauna Le Marbe.

Diane Gilstrap
Joplin, Missouri

READING PLEASURE

I just obtained a copy of your first issue of *Fantastic Films* and enjoyed it immensely. In a field that has become dominated by cheap and trashy publications, it is a pleasure to read one of intelligence and quality.

James C. Reynolds
Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania

Please address all comments, suggestions, corrections, footnotes, explanations, threats and promises of glory to *Fantastic Films Letters*, 2701 W. Howard Street, Chicago, Ill. 60645

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The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction in the Cinema

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—MICHAEL STEIN—

THE MOTHERSHIP CONNECTION: COSMIC ARCHITECTURE THROUGHOUT HISTORY

1977 shall be known as—among other things—the year of the Mothership concept. Technically, a mothership is an aero-space vehicle that carries smaller craft that may be launched and recovered while the main craft is still in flight.

*Star Wars brought us the massive, coolly glittering, finally evil, construction known as the Death Star. C-3PO unveiled the brilliantly scintillating, frothy, etherial matrix of the Sky Harbor. Each of these motherships was quite capable of emitting small herds of independent vehicles.

These two ships are dynamic opposites of stellar Karma, or Yang and Yin. The Death Star represents the deadly and destructive side of the Universe; it looms ominously, coldly, destroying worlds with streams of cruel, geometric death. Sky Harbor



The Thousand Year Space Ark above was used to illustrate a scholarly article on interstellar flight. The ark is built into a hollowed-out asteroid (see page 10 for cutaway version). Below, an Airport of the Future floats above the Arizona mountains. This transportation center would maintain aircraft and spacecraft and would have hotels, restaurants, and other services for passengers.



Pictorial Essay
by CLYDE JONES
and MICHAEL STEIN

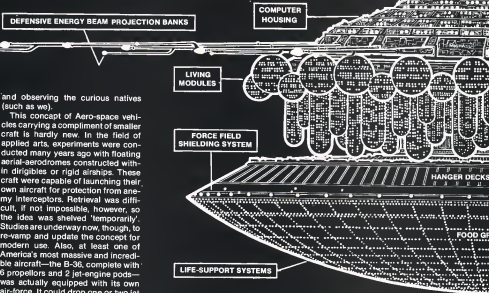
embodies mystery, majesty, and happy magic, and is home to swarms of bright and tumbling engaging elflike creatures. Totally opposed in intent and outlook as they may be, they are yet quite similar in basic operation and structural philosophy.

Each of these vessels is a deep space vehicle for huge numbers of the builder's race. They are both large in extent, and carry a number of different types of auxiliary vehicles. The Death Star carries the T.I.E. fighters for offensive/defensive operations, much as a modern aircraft carrier carries interceptors. It also carries the much larger Star Destroyers for longer range operations. Sky Harbor seems infested with multitudes of diverse craft, apparently for exploration of odd planets (such as Earth)

naissance. The entire package travelled to the moon, then launched the LEM and later recovered it, completing one launch/recovery cycle. Unfortunately, the LEM was left to its own devices and only part of the 'mothership' returned to Earth orbit. The Russians have used a sort of 'mothership' in their orbital lab exper-

expeditions will be based on main-frames holding the star-drives and living systems, with special purpose multi-mission craft attached. These main-frames will form the basic 'motherships' from which missions will be launched as required, and recovered where possible. (Some of the information extraction drones will

A GRAPHIC CONCEPT OF 'SKY HARBOR' The Mother Ship From 'CLOSE ENCOUNTERS'



and observing the curious natives (such as we).

This concept of Aero-space vehicles carrying a compliment of smaller craft is hardly new. In the field of applied arts, experiments were conducted many years ago with floating aerial-aerodromes constructed within dirigibles or rigid airships. These craft were capable of launching their own aircraft for protection from enemy interceptors. Retrieval was difficult, if not impossible, however, so the idea was shelved 'temporarily'. Studies are underway now, though, to re-vamp and update the concept for modern use. Also, at least one of America's most massive and incredible aircraft—the B-36, complete with 6 propellers and 2 jet-engine pods—was actually equipped with its own air-force. It could drop one or two jet interceptors in flight and allow them to take care of offending aircraft, then retrieve them on a strange trapeze device for further use. These mini-jets were named for the thing they most resembled: Goblins.

In space, both America and Russia have used variations of the mothership concept in their exploration and orbital vehicles. The Apollo program used one 'mother-ship' composed of modules for special purposes: Command, life support, and Lunar Recon-

no, with modules shipped into orbit, assembled there, and then maneuvered for experiments.

Farther in the future of man's space exploration lies more 'mother craft'. NASA studies have shown that explorations of the planet Mars will be best done from interplanetary ships that can launch both one-way reconnaissance drones to the surface and (we sincerely hope) two-way manned landers. In the future, interstellar

be primarily one-way.) Some of these craft are designated as intra-system exploratory vehicles, meant only for operation in space. Others will be intended for landings on any Earth-type planets that will be encountered, and will incorporate lift-off booster systems using either chemical systems or modified fusion drives. Whether these landers will be of the

'space shuttle' configuration, or will operate in pieces like the LEM, with replaceable landing rockets, remains to be determined.

A corresponding feature of the cinematic sky harbors is their construction philosophy: both are composed of different types of basic modules. The surface of Lucas's Death Star was composed mainly of 6 different types of modular panels, cut and joined in myriads of different

of the inhabitants. The globes on the perimeter are modular in nature, and the main hull is simply pieced together from basic segments.

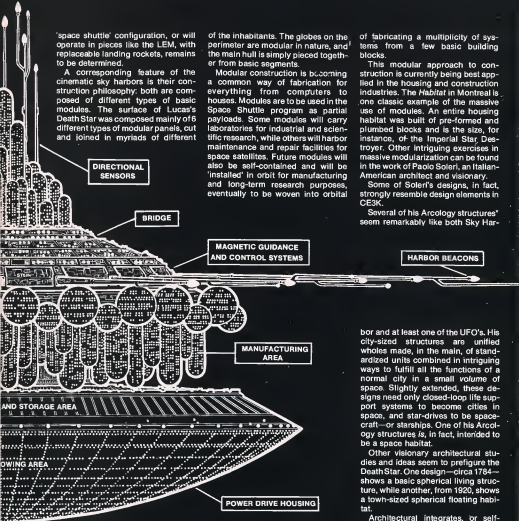
Modular construction is becoming a common way of fabrication for everything from computers to houses. Modules are to be used in the Space Shuttle program as partial payloads. Some modules will carry laboratories for industrial and scientific research, while others will harbor maintenance and repair facilities for space satellites. Future modules will also be self-contained and will be 'installed' in orbit for manufacturing and long-term research purposes, eventually to be woven into orbital

of fabricating a multiplicity of systems from a few basic building blocks.

This modular approach to construction is currently being best applied in the housing and construction industries. The *Habitat* in Montreal is one classic example of the massive use of modules. An entire housing habitat was built of pre-formed and plumbed blocks and is the size, for instance, of the Imperial Star Destroyer. Other intriguing exercises in massive modularization can be found in the work of Paolo Soleri, an Italian-American architect and visionary.

Some of Soleri's designs, in fact, strongly resemble design elements in *CE3K*.

Several of his Arcology structures* seem remarkably like both Sky Har-



bor and at least one of the UFO's. His city-sized structures are unified wholes made, in the main, of standardized units combined in intriguing ways to fulfill all the functions of a normal city in a small volume of space. Slightly extended, these designs need only closed-loop life support systems to become cities in space, and star-drives to be spacecraft—or starships. One of his Arcology structures is, in fact, intended to be a space habitat.

Other visionary architectural studies and ideas seem to prefigure the Death Star. One design—circa 1784—shows a basic spherical living structure, while another, from 1920, shows a town-sized spherical floating habitat.

Architectural integrates, or self-contained cities, seem an excellent beginning for massive space-going vessels. City-structures, modularization, motherships; these ideas, combined with developing techniques of building may indeed provide our own space-travelling mother-city-ships for future deep space explorations.

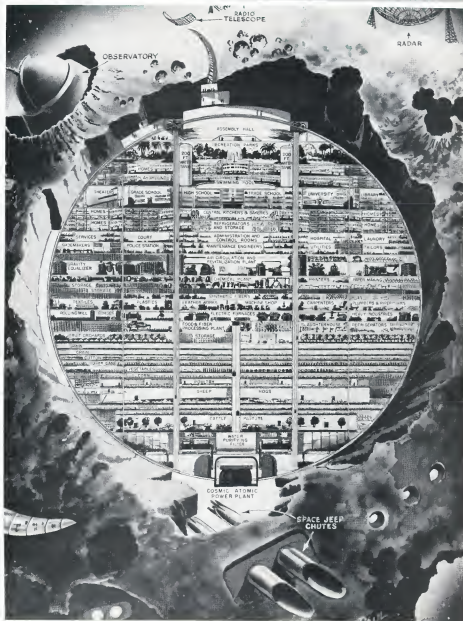
space stations.

Eventually, massive colonies in space will be fabricated from pre-built segments and the empty fuel tanks of the boosters that got them there. These cities in space will be able to not only support themselves, but manufacture materials vitally needed on Earth from raw materials shipped from the moon and its semi-permanent colonies. The modular technique will provide a handy means

ways. Most of the weapons towers were molded in one form, and trimmed off at different heights to make different size towers.

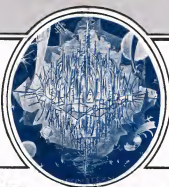
The totally different Sky Harbor also seemed to be modular. The towers can easily be built up from standardized segments permanently bonded into cohesive wholes, or possibly be left movable to suit the whims

*ARCLOGY: Architectural Ecology: the science of developing complete self-contained living systems on the city level utilizing modular systems and overall cohesive planning to make a single, naturalistic, organic and integrated structure.



CITY SHIP

At left, a cutaway of the *Thousand Year Space Ark* shows the extent of the detailed planning involved in creating a city ship. The painting of a Dysthatar-type ship (bottom of page) is similar enough to assume that the idea has been around for some time. This is further illustrated by the Domstern, or "Star Cathedral" of Bruno Taut, from the 1919 book, *Alpine Architektur*.

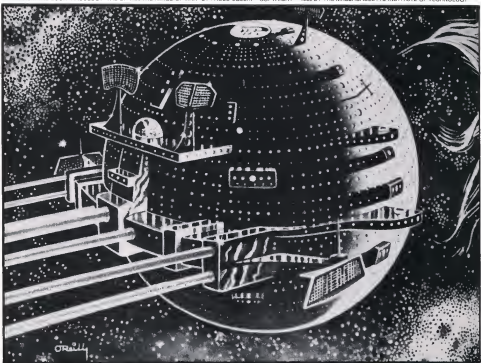


GALLERY

far; note the resemblance to the mother-ship of *Cosmo Encounters*. Finally, in the Arizona desert, the arcology of Paolo Soleri is nearing completion in the form of a futuristic city (right top and cutaway below). Although earthbound, the idea of a complete living system within a single massive unit is the basis of any city ship structure.



FROM THE BOOK *ARCOLY: THE CITY IN THE IMAGE OF MAN* BY PAOLO SOLERI. COPYRIGHT © 1969 BY THE MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY





The Alien Language Of CE3K Translated!

Linguistic Analysis
by TAUNA LE MARBE

THE WORDS, THE COLORS, AND THE MUSIC OF THOUGHT

Communication is the act of imparting knowledge, opinions, secrets, news or facts. This we do by putting thoughts into words, and words into structured phrases, either spoken or written. The listener or reader must absorb the message and mentally define the meaning. This is a lengthy process at best, and this is not taking into consideration the possible differences between the sender's and receiver's language or simply the possible different definitions for a specific word.

In an interview with Dr. J. Allen Hynek, technical advisor for CE3K (FF, April, 1975), he stated that the "color and tone language is a way to dramatize things . . . symbolic of a higher form of communication that we have." In a conversation with Dr. Hynek following publication of the interview quoted above, I asked pointedly, "Do you mean telepathy?" He answered after some consideration, "Yes, I would think so. Something along those lines."

The attempt to portray telepathy is a monumental task indeed, and it is to the credit of the creators of CE3K that they did it so well. Starting with the three way language barrier, French-Spanish-English in the opening scene, the lack of man's ability to communicate with his fellow men is pointed to again and again: when Roy Neary is unable to share his feelings and experiences with his wife, Ronnie; and when French scientist, Claude Lacombe, is unable (even with the aid of his translator) to get the project security officer to understand the significance of the 'implantees' being there, with his pleas, "But they were invited. They belong here more than we!"

It seems easier to communicate with aliens than with our fellow beings.

THE LANGUAGE

There were twelve communications involving the aliens in our shared close encounter of the third kind. They are as follows, in the order of their occurrence. A brief description precedes each and a commentary follows. Because of the unique nature of these beings it is not words we are translating, but sights, sounds, and thoughts in their pure forms. Conversion is therefore done on the basis required for each.

FIRST KNOWN COMMUNICATION: In the desert of Mexico outside of the small village of Sonoyita . . .

Method: Action intended to induce psychological climate and perhaps stimulate a "what next?" attitude by receivers.

Action: Return of the Flight 19 planes lost in May '45, thirty odd years later in mint condition.

Interpretation: This is a total thought process with implications that a time barrier as we know it might not truly exist. Since the pilots were not returned and the planes could not have existed in the desert in perfect running condition after over thirty years, there are several questions that arise. What happened to the planes? Why were they returned? What happened to the pilots? Why weren't they returned? Why didn't the planes show age? What will happen next?

The purpose of this psychological communication was two-fold; one, to announce that 'something' was coming, and, secondly, to stimulate the minds among the scientifically intelligent community.

• • • • •

SECOND COMMUNICATION: same location

Method: Implant? Musical-auditory?

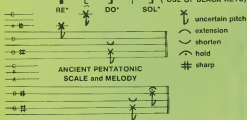
Action: When the planes appeared there was an old Mexican peon present. When asked what happened he said in Spanish of equivalent of, "The sun came out last night. It sang to me."

Interpretation: It would be simple perhaps if the witness was reliable, however the old man was obviously in shock. The sun of course does not come out at night, yet his face appeared to be 'sunburned', or, perhaps, radiation-burned. The only thing we know for sure is that something bright, capable of burning a person's skin, and making some 'noise' akin to a musical tone was in the vicinity of the occurrence. At this point little else can be determined.

THIRD COMMUNICATION: Benares, India; the sadhu, a holy man and his followers produced five notes. The intervals were never whole but quartered, halved or bent. These five notes, they said, came from the sky.

Method: five notes

Action: ME DO⁺ 3 DO⁺ 5 SOL⁺ (*USE OF BLACK KEYS)



Interpretation: As shown these five notes fit into the five pitches of the pentatonic mode, once used in ancient Greece and Japan. The black keys of a piano represent such patterns. These notes represent a 'key code' into the mind such as is used to key in a retrieval sequence from a computer.

The purpose of this key code will be discussed later. At this point it is interesting to note that five tones from our distant past are used by extra-terrestrials to key our future responses.

FOURTH COMMUNICATION: This is a system of hand symbols based on the work of Zoltan Kodaly, for teaching music to the deaf. Dr. Claude Lacombe incorporated this system as a visual translation of the five tones. (Kodaly, a collector of Hungarian Folk Songs and a traditional composer was born in Kecskemet, Hungary, December 16, 1882 and died in Budapest, March 6, 1967.)

Method: Hand symbols.

Action:



Interpretation: 1) Full tone, Re to the 2nd; 2) Up full tone, Me to the 3rd; 3) Down major 1/3, Do to the first; 4) Drop octave, Do one-half one; 5) Up a perfect fifth, Sol to the fifth.

This accomplishes a transcription to the Western Ear and when played on a musical instrument producing perfectly regular sinusoidal compressions and rarefactions of the air will come forth in pure tones. The frequency of repetition of the regular variations of the pure tone is the primary factor determining the pitch, and further that the relationship is a



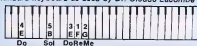
logarithmic one. Musically, notes an octave apart seem to have a great deal in common, and a succession of notes spaced at octave intervals appear to be equally spaced to the ear; their frequencies however, are found to be in the ratio 1:2:4:8: etc., thus the apparently arithmetic progression in perception corresponds to a geometrical progression in frequency as shown in the following equation:

τ	FREQUENCY	$\Phi = A \sin 2\pi \left[\frac{x}{\lambda} - \frac{t}{T} \right]$	τ	FORM OF THE WAVE
λ	THE AMPLITUDE	$K = \frac{x}{\lambda}$ the WAVE NUMBER	\sin	PERIODIC FUNCTION
Φ	WAVELENGTH	$\Phi = A \sin 2\pi \left[Kx - Ut \right]$	A	MAXIMUM VALUE OF Φ
			$A, K, U,$	CONSTANTS INDEPENDENT OF x AND t

When combining this equation with the use of cathode-ray oscillograph traces for the notes—



—keying in the five notes on a standard keyboard as used by Dr. Claude Lacombe as shown—



—then in turn keying this into a computer terminal to handle the mathematical progressions and beam these skyward, we have arrived at the 'key code' expected of us to retrieve the next communication.

FIFTH COMMUNICATION: The Goldstone Radiotelescope and Station 14 in Barstow, California.

Method: It was set for a vector in "deep space."

Action: The message, when beamed using the appropriate equation and oscillograph traces for the five notes, retrieved the following:

140 44 30 40 36 10

Interpretation: It was the Interpreter, Mr. David Laughlin, formerly a cartographer, who realized that the numbers that were transmitted as a response from "deep space" were Earth coordinates. These Longitude and Latitude numbers intersected at a point known as Devil's Tower, Wyoming.

It is significant that Xeno Sapiens would have this extensive a knowledge of our Earth Topography, and leads one to postulate that they had indeed been studying our planet a long time, or had acquired such knowledge by studying the maps of their abducted pilots.

SIXTH COMMUNICATION: Its Method, Action and Interpretation is an extension of the fourth and fifth communications. It was found that certain people among us had the psychic ability to pick up the five notes as an 'implanted message.' Played over and over again in their minds in much the same way as the scientists used the computer and radiotelescope, they received a telepathic 'image' communication of Devil's Tower Wyoming. Since these people for the most part lacked scientific training they did not receive geodetic coordinates, but images of the topography of the mountain itself. Their visions of the mountain were extremely detailed. This helps to demonstrate how far behind a computer is to the potential capabilities of the human mind.

The remaining communications took place in rapid succession.

SEVENTH: Three of the craft came down to the landing sight at Devil's Tower.

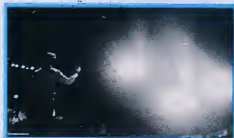
Interpretation: In light of what was to follow, this appears to be a 'test contact' to survey what our reaction would be and to possibly scan for weapons. Satisfied, evidently, that we meant no harm . . .

EIGHTH: One of the same three ships that had been in the scouting party signaled: Red, 3 times. From somewhere in the clouds above came a response: Red, 3 times; White, 3 times; Blue, 3 times.

Interpretation: This signal probably designated the site as safe, while the second set was 'all systems go.'

NINTH: Return of the abductees.

Interpretation: By returning the abductees in healthy and 'unaged' condition this accomplished a two-fold mission: one, that the visitors had knowledge far in advance of any Earth technology, thus definitely establishing their origin as extra-terrestrial once and for all; and second, showing as a matter of good faith that their visit was benign.





*AN INTERVIEW
WITH KIRK ALYN*

**FROM
BROADWAY
HOOFER
TO
2,288
SATURDAYS
AS SUPERMAN**



Kirk Alyn, as Superman, overturns an automobile. Note the ballet-like stance of ex-hooper Alyn, and the running board of the car behind the fender.

Kirk Alyn was one of the last great serial heroes, starring in both *Superman* and *Blackhawk* for Columbia Pictures and its legendary producer, Sam Katzman. Yet, this handsome, shy man from New Jersey, who began his acting career by auditioning for a Broadway show as a gag (he won the role), ended up working on Broadway with Ginger Rogers (*Girl Crazy*), Joseph Cotton (*Band Concert*), George S. Kaufman (*Of Thee I Sing*), and in early one-and-two reelers for Warner Brothers with Shemp Howard and Dizzy Dean. He also pioneered on early television in New York in 1939 (when it was illegal to do commercials and only a few bars around town had receivers). He danced with Imogene Coca and Billy De Wolfe, played the Portuguese sailor in *My Sister Eileen*, with Fred Astaire and Rita Hayworth in *You Were Never Lovelier*, and in such films as *Pistol Packin' Mama*, *Little Miss Broadway*, *The Life of St. John The Baptist*, *Lucky Jordan*, *Man from Rio*, and *Call of the Rockies*.

In short, he was in Hollywood in the "old days" of contract players and 10,000 theaters and 500 movies a year produced by the studios. Associate Editor Jerry Neeley interviewed Mr. Alyn at his California home and the subject, naturally, was the old *Superman* serials and the new *Superman* movies. "He is a great storyteller," says Neeley, "and a terrific athlete." We therefore began by asking him about the stunts he used to perform.

FF: Do you ever use stuntmen?

ALYN: No. Neither did I use any mechanical means, like trampolines or anything like that.

FF: You did all your own leaps?

ALYN: Oh, yes. I was able to do this easily. In my earlier career in show business, I was a hooper. Then, when Fred Astaire came out, he leaped all over the place, and that wasn't called hoofing anymore, that was dancing. So, I went to study ballet, and I studied for several years. I took two lessons every day, and practiced in between time, so I developed very strong legs. In ballet, strong legs are one of the most important things, so you have what they call good elevation. Nijinsky would take a leap almost in the middle of the stage, and leap right off the stage into the wings. He's the only guy that could ever do it. Nureyev is graceful, but in elevation



Superman poses with children on the set. Alyn also did many charity benefits.

no one has ever come near Nijinsky. So, I was thinking of Nijinsky when I took ballet. I wanted to be that good, and I added tap dancing to it. I wanted to be the best damn hooper in the business. And I was a pretty good dancer. I made good money at it.

All the things I did in show business came in handy when I did *Superman*. Whenever I did any leaps or dives, or anything like that, I did them gracefully. For instance, if the camera was pointed right toward me, I would jump higher than the camera, and leap over the camera, and get into the scene. Then, I would land gracefully and run. Whenever I would dive out the window, you would see me jump right off the floor, and out the window. I'd fly right out the window.

I later noticed that in that first serial, when I take off, I go right over the camera. I did that with no trampoline,

I just dove over the camera and landed on a table way back there. I know it was a good shot because they used it a lot. You could see my feet go right off the ground. Even stuntmen marvelled and asked, "How do you do that?" I had good elevation, and if you're a ballet dancer you will notice I go into first position when I do it. I didn't notice it myself until I saw the serial three or four times, and I said, "I hope no one sees that—my going into ballet position." Then too, when I land, I land gracefully. After all, everything Superman does, he does effortlessly.

FF: When you were picked for the part, did they know about your ballet skills?

ALYN: No, they didn't know. What they wanted was a fellow who looked pretty good in tights, and he had to look a little like the comic book character at the time. At that time, I looked very much like the guy.

FF: Yes, you did. Curly and everything.

ALYN: After a while they changed comic book artists and little touches were added, but at that time, I looked like him. I was about the hundred-and-twenty-fifth, not the first one they looked at, but I got picked.

FF: When you were picked for Superman, did it ever occur to you that you would be typecast?

ALYN: No, I didn't think of that. I just thought of it as another picture. You never think typecasting is going to

happen to you. You always think a big sign is going to come out in front of you that will say, "You're being typecast." But it doesn't. You don't know it until the picture is released. Then you go to a casting office, and they say, "Hi there, Superman. We can't use you. You're Superman." I said, "You can't use me?" He said, "No, Jesus, you're Superman." I said, "Well, what the hell has that got to do with it?" Finally, I went back to the studio. I went to Columbia and Max Arnold. The girl said, "Have you got an appointment?" I said, "No, I haven't got an appointment." You just tell him I'm

'I hoped no one would notice that I started my leaps in a ballet position!'

down here, and I'm damn mad." I figured what have I got to lose. No one will hire me anyhow. So Max says, "Sure Kirk, come on in." He had heard me. So, I went on in. I explained it to him. I said, "Explain it to me. I played the character of Superman, and now I can't play in anything else. Why is that?"

He said, "Suppose we put you in a picture, and you're playing a character, maybe a bad guy, or even a good guy. People are watching the picture

and they believe you. You're doing a good job. They believe what you're doing. All of a sudden the picture's over and on comes the serial, and there's the same guy playing Superman. Well, either they're going to believe you in the picture there, or they're going to believe Superman. But, they're not going to believe both. We can't take that chance, Kirk." I said, "How long is it going to be?" He says, "Five years." I said, "Five years! I'm out of the business for five years then. I think I'll go back to New York." But I didn't go back just then. I made the second Superman serial and *Blackhawk* and then I went back to New York. I stayed in New York for four or five years. I did very well. No one cared whether I did Superman, and I didn't tell anyone. It was playing all over the city, but I just dressed up like a businessman, and off I went doing about 125 commercials and doing my stage shows.

FF: You played *Blackhawk*. Which serial did you like best, *Blackhawk* or *Superman*?

ALYN: I would have liked *Blackhawk* the best out of the six serials I did at Republic. But, *Superman* was different. He was from another planet, and I did all my own stunts. And, I had the most fun on it.

FF: You considered it fun? It wasn't a chore?

ALYN: Oh, it was hard. But, as hard as the work was, it was fun. It's the same as when I was a dancer. I used to rehearse ten hours a day, but it was fun. People would say, "How can you stand it? Ten hours a day just throwing a dame around." But, I loved it, it was fun. If you like something, it's fun. If you hate something, it's a chore.

FF: Of the two Superman serials, do you think one is better than the other?

ALYN: Well, on the first one I was sort of a guinea pig. You see, they didn't know how I was going to fly. They didn't know how I was going to do various things, and they tried a lot of things. They even tried a stuntman, and he didn't work out. I had to do everything over again myself. Finally, when they saw I could do all the stunts fine, and they looked well, they let me do everything. This is why on the second one, we knew pretty much where we were going and how we were going to do all those things. All we had to do is set up, and I did them. Before, we were trying all the things out, and it was a little harder.

But, the second one I enjoyed doing. I had Lyle Talbot to work with.



On location in Calgary, Alberta, Canada (which was used to simulate the farmlands of Kansas), Kirk Alyn and Noel Neill (who play little Lois Lane's parents) pose with Kathy Painter, who portrays Lois Lane as a little girl in the new Superman movies.

He was a very fine professional actor. It was a cinch, you know, when you worked with a good actor. It was like other pictures when I worked with stuntmen. It was a snap to work with stuntmen because they knew what they were doing. But when you worked with an actor, and did a fight, you could kill him. I always said I'll do all the parts, but I won't do them with an actor. Put in a stuntman, and I'll do them. This is how it was, you see. Working with a professional actor was the same way. He knew what he was doing.

FF: Did you ever get injured in *Superman*?

ALYN: No. Kids always ask me, "If you did all your own stunts in *Superman*, did you ever get hurt?" No, I never got hurt, but I damn near got killed a couple of times. And they wonder, "How could you almost get killed, and never get hurt?" But, if you work with a moving train or something, you could get killed very easily. If my foot slipped back there or I moved, I could have easily gotten it. **FF:** In the first serial, when you were supposed to fly, didn't they try harnesses?

ALYN: Yes. It wasn't a harness so much as a breast plate they had made. They took a plaster cast of my torso, and they made a steel breastplate. Then, they could hang the wires on that and you couldn't see the pull of the wires. If you had on a harness, you could see the pull on the wires. What they did was very difficult for me. They raised me up about 15 feet, because I had to fly along side of an airplane. They did all the flying scenes in one day. They had me hanging there, but they made no provision to hold up my legs. Now, you know what it would be like if you laid on a table and lifted your legs up a couple of times. Boy, you could feel those stomach muscles. Well, I had to do it for eight hours. At the end of that day, I was tired. Then the special effects men convinced the producer that they could opaque the wires, and light them in such a manner that you wouldn't be able to see them. And, the producer says, "All right. Fine. Go ahead." And they did it. All day long all I heard was "Kirk, hold your legs up. Kirk, hold your legs up. Hold your legs up." I wasn't able to hold my legs up with the wind machine in my face. They looked at it the next day, and you could see the wires better than you could see me. The producer got so mad he said, "Get out. Get out, all

of you. You'll never work for me again." Finally, we went to a special effects studio, and we used another method. No wires. I just stood on the floor and they turned the camera over, and I was horizontal.

FF: There was also a lot of cartoon animation in there.

ALYN: In the distance. Everything that was in the distance. Once I got off the ground and was in the distance, that was animated. But, I did give them a heck of a lot of good footage of me getting off the ground. Once I was off the ground, you see, I was like a bullet. So, it was easy enough to do. It was fun.

FF: I've also seen photographs of you carrying real people.

ALYN: Yes, I did. I carried a guy under one arm, and a girl under the other arm. They were real people. It was a funny thing. When we worked on location, and I wore that *Superman* suit, the director, and everyone else, including me, would forget that I am not *Superman*. The director would say, "OK, Kirk, I want you to jump to that roof, over to that roof, and then you're going to jump down." I would say, "OK." I'd just go ahead and do it. I

don't know why. I guess because he said so.

The same with carrying these people. Now, in rehearsal they're supposed to be passed out in the fire. I rush in, pick them both up, and run out with them. Well, I did it a couple of times for the camera, as a rehearsal. He said, "OK, that will be perfect. That will be fine. All right, let's roll it this time, with everything." Now, they light the fires, they get the smoke, and they light up everything. Well, I run in, get these people and come out, and you can't see me because there's so damn much smoke. Well, the director says, "We'll have to do it again because it's too damn smoky." OK, we did it again and this time something else happened. So, I did it about four or five times. After about the fifth time, he says, "Jeez, that was a good one, Kirk, except you come so close to the lens, I could see you straining a little bit." I said, "But, Spence, these are real people I'm carrying." He said, "Oh, Jesus, you're not supposed to be carrying real people. Get him a chair. Sit down. Get him some coffee. You want some coffee, Kirk?" He said,

(Continued on page 59)



Kirk Alyn at home (at right) in the familiar phone booth; note the serial poster.

FIRST REPORT ON THE NEW

SUPERMAN **MOVIES**

PREVIEW by MIKE GOLD

Sol Harrison is an amazing man. At 60, he can trace his involvement with comic books all the way back to *Famous Funnies* #1, the first commercial comic ever published. He worked as an engraver on the first issues of *Supermen* and *Action Comics*, he later became production manager of National Periodical Publications (*Superman's* publisher) and, shortly before the name was officially changed to DC Comics, Sol became its president.

**ONE
ENTIRE
SCENE
TAKES
PLACE IN
THE AIR...
SUPERMAN
HIMSELF IS
KNOCKED
THROUGH A
SKYSCRAPER!**

There is no one actively publishing comic books today that has been at it longer than Sol. His familiarity with the medium's suzerain is intense: *The Man of Steel* has played an important role in almost all of Sol Harrison's adult life.

For the past year or so, Sol has been sauntering around the halls of DC Comics like an expectant father. He has seen his godchild, *Superman*, grow from comic book success to American myth—the hero who almost singlehandedly saved the comic book industry during its bleakest period (the 1950's funny book burnings) by his overwhelming success on television. Three generations have grown up with *The Man of Steel*.

But now Sol can participate in what is perhaps the ultimate artistic expression of a comic book character: a multimillion dollar motion picture, one of the greatest ac-



tors and craftsmen-and-women in the business today. At over thirty million dollars, more money is being spent on the Superman movie than was spent on the artists and writers during The Man of Steel's forty year career (and let me hasten to add that most of the talent working on the various Superman comics have always received the highest rates in the industry).

The activity has been nothing less than frenetic: some three years ago, Ilya Salkind and Pierre Spengler (of *The Three Musketeers* fame) started property negotiations with DC Comics and its parent company, Warner Communications, owners of Warner Brothers pictures. After Salkind and Spengler secured the rights, they commissioned Mario (Godfather) Puzo to write the first draft script, thereby killing two birds with one gem: start the ball rolling, and making a statement to potential actors, distributors and industry comrades that the Superman movie was Very Serious.

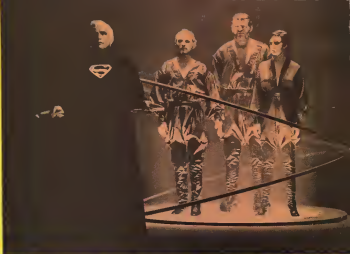
Puzo came over to DC's offices to discuss the character with the people who know him best: the editors and writers who produce his adventures.

As the producers were lining up their people, talk of the project hit the papers. Who would play Superman? Rumors started flying—they would continue to soar for quite some time. Guy Hamilton, perhaps the best-known of the James Bond directors, was initially tapped for similar chores on this project. He seemed like the right choice: he had certainly proven himself as the top director of big budget heroic thrillers. Finally, the first important member of the cast was secured: Marlon Brando, who occupies roughly the same space in the acting community as Superman occupies in the comics.

The choice of Brando as Jor-El, Superman's famed father, was an unusual one. Brando was not known for taking just any role; Brando signed for "in excess of two million dollars."

The producers certainly got their money's worth in free publicity. The question "why did Brando sign for Superman?" occupied the media for more than a year.

More importantly, the Brando play took the Puzo affair one step further:



Jor-El (Marlon Brando) wearing his family's crest on his tunic, prepares to send the three criminals, Zod (Terrance Stamp), Non (Jack O'Halloran), and Ursa (Sarah Douglas), into the confinement of the Negative Zone (top). Above, Jor-El and Lara prepare to send their son Kal-El (Lee Quigley) to Earth in a futuristic, modular rocket. Kal-El will grow both physically and mentally on his three year journey even though he will be in a semi-hypnotic state of suspended animation. Through a holographic device, Jor-El will teach him by induced suggestion.

if Superman's got Puzo and Brando, they must be Extremely Serious Brando is a big name actor: not only does he have a vast domestic following, but he is of greater status in the international community.

While the producers were continuing their efforts in lining up talent, the other people involved in the various aspects of *The Man of Steel* were gearing up as well. DC Comics' char-

people saw picking up the distribution rights as still another way to keep the profits all in the family: this time, Warners had to go to Salkind and Spengler. Negotiation in this direction took a bit less time (not much, though) and were no less successful.

Over at DC Comics, where it all started, excitement continued to run high. Puzo's draft was gone over by those most familiar with the character

featured in his own magazine and a newspaper strip started appearing all over the world. Superman made a personal appearance at the 1939 New York World's Fair—the first of many personal appearances over the years—and Random House published a novel in 1942.

In 1940, Superman literally took to the air in a radio program featuring Bud Collyer as the voice of the mid-



Jor-El (Marion Brando) and Lara (Susannah York) pose with their infant son Kal-El (Lee Quigley) on the doomed planet Krypton.

acters are featured on over 1,000 products (toys, games, coloring books and the like) and almost every conceivable product which could feature Superman already did so. The licensees looked on the Superman movie the way a farmer looks at a newly-planted field: these guys were growing dollar signs. Licensing Corporation of America, started by National Periodicals and therefore now the property of Warner Communications, saw the movie as a way to further merchandise Superman.

Further up in the Warner Communications building, the Warner Brothers

to make sure it was in keeping with the comics. Movies—no matter how financially successful—come and go. Superman's been around for forty years; DC has had a lot of history to protect.

During those forty years, *The Man of Steel* has had exposure in every conceivable entertainment medium. He was a success in comics since his first appearance in *Action Comics* #1, June 1938. In fact, subsequent issues of *Action* did not feature Superman on the cover, indicating the publishers didn't know what they were on to at first, and those issues didn't sell as well as the first.

Within the year, *Superman* was

mannered reporter who fought the never-ending battle for Truth, Justice and the American Way. It was this radio series that served as the launching pad for many of the pillars of the Superman myth. It institutionalized the "up, up and away" routine, served to introduce the only substance which could kill the Man of Steel (for those of you who have been living on Venus, Kryptonite, small chunks of Superman's home planet, Krypton, is the substance in question), and it is believed to have introduced Jimmy Olsen, the office boy and later cub reporter over at the Daily Planet.

The radio show also established what would later be a popular vehicle

in comics: the teaming-up of superheroes. It was on the radio where Superman first met Batman, in fact, when Collier went on vacation, the *Caped Crusader* often carried the show. It wasn't until 1954 when Superman and Batman were regularly teamed-up in comics.

In 1941, Paramount brought Superman to the movie theaters in a highly-acclaimed series of color cartoons,

show—by virtue of its overwhelming impact—served to freeze character development for the greater part of a decade. But it was the series of cartoons that reflected the comic books by finding all of its virtues and exploiting them with the power of full animation. These cartoons were so well done that, when 1977's *Fantastic Animation Festival* made the rounds of the theaters, the only old-time

was cast to type—he looked very, very good in costume and equally good as Clark Kent. Noel Neill, of Henry Alrich fame, was cast as Lois Lane. The serial delved into Superman's origin and went on through a barely impressive super-hero actioner.

The crew repeated their efforts in 1950 in *Atom Man Vs. Superman*, a serial which was improved only in a historical sense by the inclusion of



Director Richard Donner (far left) explains a scene to (from the left) Jimmy Olsen (Marc McClure), Perry White (Jackie Cooper), Lois Lane (Margo Kidder) and Clark Kent (Christopher Reeve).

initially produced by Max Fleisher of Popeye and Betty Boop fame. These cartoons did much to capture the flavor of the comic book character—by and large, the menaces and situations were worthy of *The Man of Steel*. Daily Planet editor Perry White and reporter Lois Lane were there; the former to place Clark Kent at the scene of the action, the latter to make sure Superman would have somebody to rescue in the nick of time.

Of all the various incarnations (to date), the Paramount/Fleisher cartoons were the most true to the character of the time. The radio show advanced the legend by adding new characters and devices, the television

cartoon to be included was *The Mechanical Monsters*, the second of the series and the one generally regarded by most connoisseurs (as well as a consensus of the staff of DC Comics) as the best of the lot.

The cartoons disappeared in 1943, about the same time super-hero comics sales peaked. Five years later, Columbia Pictures' Sam Katzman released the first of his two fifteen-chapter serials, simply intitled "Superman." It's hard to say exactly why Columbia took the project on; by 1948 serials were on their last legs and it was difficult to secure sufficient budget to do a first-class job. Kirk Alyn, a handsome clean-cut actor

arch-enemy Lex Luthor, played by Lyle Talbot.

George Reeves was cast in the lead of 1951's feature-length *Superman and the Mole Men*, a dry run for the famed television series produced by the comics publishing house. Whitney Ellsworth, National Comics' editorial director, oversaw the operation which neatly segued into the broadcast series.

That television series—all 104 episodes, produced between 1951 and 1957—is both a television and a comics legend. The show is still being

rerun over twenty years after Reeves' unfortunate death. It did much to entrench Superman in the minds of parents who, during the fifties, were quite up in arms about the "comic book problem." The show was unpretentiously and bas-
tically entertaining.

always accurate to the comic books, probably because Superman editor Mort Weisinger occupied a similar position with the television series.

There were differences between the Superman of the novel, the radio, the movies and television, but they were usually minor. The extra-curricular exposure never lived up to the character's potential, and the real crime was that such treatment tended to tame the comic book itself. Superman's parents were variously named Eben, John and Jonathan and Sarah, Mary and Martha, and these discrepancies often worked their way into the comics. The role of Jimmy Olsen never quite solidified until he was awarded his own comic book in 1954. It really wasn't until *Jimmy Olsen* #1 that we really knew the cub reporter was an intelligent person capable of acting outside of the shadow of The Man of Steel, something we never

had little to do with the comics, outside of the most basic elements of the legend. Whereas the play was well-received critically, it was financially less-than-successful. ABC television ran an adaptation of the musical several years ago, reworking it from a critical success to something of a tired joke.

What all of these adaptations of Superman had in common, no matter how removed they were from the comics, was the essential Superman triangle: Clark Kent is deeply in love with Lois Lane, who only has eyes for Superman, who wants to be accepted as a regular Joe. It was a classic struggle—Superman, who can save an entire galaxy in an afternoon, is somehow incapable of putting his love-life in order.

The comics evolved during the past forty years. The Daily Planet got bought out by a large media conglom-

It is an open secret that Superman generally known is that the first

learned from the television series.

Since super-villains were not employed in the movies and on television (with the above-noted exception of Luthor in the second serial), some of the great Superman villains—The Frankster, Toyman, Mr. Mxyzptik (who was actually an invention of the newspaper strip), and later Titano and Brainiac—went ignored on film.

Superman enjoyed a number of other media incarnations, but these were parenthetical to the mythology. Bud Collyer encoined as the voice of The Man of Steel on *The Superman-Aquaman Hour*, a Saturday morning cartoon series which featured a number of DC heroes of the mid-to-late 1960's. Hanna-Barbera, producers of this series, went on to combine these heroes on *Super-Friends*, a version of *The Justice League of America* comic book oriented towards a much younger viewer. This latter series has been quite successful; unfortunately, there has been little attempt to preserve continuity in either program although the basic tenets of the Superman legend are adhered to.

The legend worked its way to Broadway in 1966, in a musical properly titled "It's a Bird, It's a Plane, It's Superman," starring Bob Holiday in the title role. Jack Cassidy played gossip columnist Max Mencken, an original creation never picked up by the comics. Again, this production

merate, Galaxy Communications (not coincidentally, about the same time National Periodicals was purchased by Warner Communications) and its president, Morgan Edge, shifted Clark Kent from print to broadcast media. Edge and a number of other characters joined Perry White, Lois Lane and Jimmy Olsen in the cast of regulars.

In 1970, Julius Schwartz became editor of the Superman titles (this prior to the Galaxy storyline) and he proceeded to give the feature a much-needed overhauling. Lois Lane started to act as an independent woman, generally more concerned with her career as a reporter than with her relationship with Superman. She even fell in love with Clark Kent, and the triangle reversed itself for a time. New supervillains were created and The Man of Steel himself became less static.

Salkind and Spengler had a lot to learn from, and learn they did. They had to choose which elements of the Superman myth they wanted to present, naturally opening the movie with the origin sequence on Krypton.

They do a fair bit of updating themselves. The original Buck Rogers-like rocketship which carried the child from Krypton to Earth was totally restructured to survive in this post-*Star Wars*/*Close Encounters* environment. Enroute the child is "educated" via mental-tapes left by his father Jor-



Valerie Perrine shows off her weapons as Eve Teschmacher, girlfriend of the evil Lex Luthor.

El The rocket is discovered by Jonathan and Martha Kent (the "official" names in the comics), played by Glenn Ford and Phyllis Thaxter. The child is named after Martha's family, the Clarks (a device from the comics), and he grows up in Smallville.

In another deviation from the comics, it is Jonathan who dies before Martha. At his graveside, Young Clark (Jeff East) tells his mother the time has come for him to achieve his destiny. He next appears in his Arctic Fortress of Solitude—which was fashioned by his father, and therefore is representative of the distinctive angular Kryptonian architecture, where he consults a computer Jor-El programmed to respond to any likely difficulty his son might encounter. This truly paternal function is performed in a holographic image of Jor-El, so Marlon Brando (contrary to rumor) appears throughout the film.

eastern side of the San Andreas fault, and this land would of course go up in value if the ocean were to be off the coast of Nevada. The solution is simple enough—steal an atomic missile and explode it on the faultline!

It is something of an open secret that Superman is really two movies, like Salikind's *The Three Musketeers* and its sequel *The Four Musketeers*, and that most (although not all) of the second movie was filmed along with the first. However, what is not generally known is that the first movie is really three pictures. The opening Krypton sequences are filmed in an entirely different manner than the Smallville or the Superman sections. Here, the Kryptonians live in cities carved out of the planet itself, with a unique angular sort of architecture, these designed by *Star Wars*' John Barry. As in the comics, Jor-El is also a member of the planet's Council of

the comics). His clothes are made out of an extremely reflective material, so it appears that this "S" is burnt into the aura surrounding him. Least one forgets, Superman's mother is played by Susannah York.

The Smallville sequences are bereft of a Superboy, true to the original comic books in the late 1930's and early 1940's. In an interesting scene, young Lois Lane passes through town with her parents—who are played by Kirk Alyn and Noel Neill!

These scenes were shot up in Manitoba (which is sort of like Kansas without the unions) in a style which more-or-less resembles the opening sequences to *The Wizard of Oz*.

Metropolis, of course, is New York City, with parts of other cities thrown in. It is the work of Wally Veevers and

is really two movies. What is not movie is actually three pictures.

Moving to Metropolis, Kent (now Chris Reeve) takes a position with *The Daily Planet*, edited by the legendary Perry White (Jackie Cooper). Lois Lane (Margot Kidder) immediately recognizes Kent as competition, after all, prior to the acquisition of this country-bumpkin, she was the paper's star reporter, and she doesn't need the competition.

Meanwhile, Lex Luthor (Gene Hackman) begins his great scheme. Luthor is portrayed in a manner slightly different from the comics, for the Luthor in print exists only to get back at *The Man of Steel* for a childhood indignation. On the great screen, this misunderstanding would seem a bit empty, particularly for the patron who has not been reading Superman the past fifteen years or so. Hackman portrays a Professor-Monarty-like villain who is given to \$500 suits and luxurious (albeit a bit kinky) living. As to his baldness (Luthor, you recall, is quite bald), well, Hackman does wear a variety of wigs during the film.

The movie has created two new characters, in order to give Luthor some help. Otis is a somewhat bumbling assistant, and is skillfully portrayed by Ned Beatty. Eve is Luthor's paramour, and is generously portrayed by Valerie Perrine.

Together, they plot to destroy California. It seems Luthor has procured much of the desert property on the

Elders, and it is his duty to aid in the sentencing of criminals to the Phantom Zone—as he does with General Zod, Ursa, and Non, played respectively by Terrance Stamp, Sarah Douglas and Jack O'Halloran. The three place a curse on Jor-El and his family; this curse is a sub-plot of the film.

Each Kryptonian family has its own crest. Jor-El's having the familiar "S" (this is an interesting deviation from



Christopher Reeve, who, disguised as Clark Kent, looks more like an over-grown jock than the level-headed, mild-mannered reporter we have come to expect from endless TV reruns.

the special effects people that carry these scenes to spectacular heights—one entire battle (in *Superman Two*) between The Man of Steel, Zod, Non and Ursa takes place in the air—Superman himself is knocked through a skyscraper!

Unfortunately, Guy Hamilton had to bow out of the production due to personal considerations. He was replaced by Richard Donner, director of *The Omen* as well as such television classics as *Kojak* and *Wanted: Dead or Alive*. Together with creative consultant Tom Mankiewicz (scripter of *Live and Let Die* and other Bond thrillers), they give full support to

atomic warhead convoy and E.G. Marshall as the President of the United States. Marc McClure plays the youthful Jimmy Olsen, who doesn't have as great a role in the movie as he (Olsen) had in the television series, but he does manage to get off at least one interesting corruption on the classic "Don't Call Me Chief" line.

Jackie Cooper, who is the second Our Gang cast member to make it to a Superman movie (Tommy Bond played Olsen in the serials), brings the necessary gruffness to the role of Perry White. In his opening scene, he has to juggle the introduction of Clark Kent, a rather miffed Lois Lane, a

flying through the skies of Metropolis, you see Superman, not an actor in colored longjohns. In this, he has a clear edge on any name actor who might have played the part—you would see a celebrity as himself, but you can see Superman when you look at Chris Reeve.

As it stands as of this writing, Superman has been pushed back from its announced June 11th premiere to sometime later in the year—perhaps as late as Christmas 1978, to take advantage of the usual season trade. The effects, as one might expect, have proven to be a major time consumer, and soundtrack composer



The Smallville High School football team.

Salikind and Spengler's vision of Superman. They act out of a total respect for the character, and do not want to misrepresent what is, after all, an American legend.

Puzo's draft was aided and abetted by Robert Benton and David and Leslie Newman; Benton and David Newman provided the "book" to the Superman play.

The bulk of the first movie, after the Krypton and Smallville sequences, is given to dealing with Luthor's mad scheme. The cast is rounded out by Trevor Howard, Harry Andrews and Maria Schell as Kryptonian Elders, Larry Hagman as leader of the Navy's

totally unopenable soda bottle, any of a number of breaking stories and telephone calls, and one rather obstinate Jimmy Olsen—and he does so like a conductor leading an orchestra of drunken virtuosos!

Christopher Reeve, who is becoming a star even before the movie is released, is an amazing talent. He brings a convincing depth of dedication to his portrayal of Superman, and counterpoints it with a sort of knowing bumpkinness as Clark Kent.

Almost as important as his acting prowess, Reeve looks convincing as The Man of Steel—he wears the costume well. When you look at him

John William's projected March sessions with the London Symphony Orchestra have been postponed awaiting a final cut.

And if *Superman One* and *Two* work, it is likely there will be more. The producers have the option for about five more movies, and based upon the rough cuts of the first film, they're already thinking about numbers three and four.

From what this reporter has seen of the first movie (and that's about thirty minutes), they'd do well to plan out the whole series. Come winter, Sol Harrison is going to be handing out cigars. ■

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The POWERS of KAL-EL

Speculation by CLYDE JONES

WHAT DO WE REALLY KNOW ABOUT Kal-El of Krypton, this 'Superman' that flies through our lives? We have vague reports that he arrived on our Earth as an infant, was raised by a rural family (as is obvious by his speech patterns, midwestern U.S.—Kansas or Illinois) and lives—somehow—in the vicinity of Metropolis City. We also have undocumented information that his home

world—if he is in fact from off-world—was destroyed in some cataclysm and that he is one of the very few survivors. We also have eyewitness accounts, possibly or probably garbled, of his capabilities. From what is known, we shall attempt to construct the profile of a most unusual and unique man.

IT IS THE MIND
OF THE BEING
THAT IS
EXTRAORDINARY.



Flight

The ability that most impresses the minds of those who have witnessed it is his power of flight. Man has long dreamed of being able to course with the eagles, flying on his own wings or with the aid of magic. Superman does it. Thousands have witnessed his

human form flashing through our skies, curvetting and turning Immelmans around various villains. Many have witnessed his aerial interception of objects and people, catching them in mid-flight: he stops rockets and bombs and people and hurls them away or carries them to safety, as required; he smashes meteoroids, batters dragons, tethers dirigibles, sky-writes, convoys, conveys and hovers tirelessly. He has been tracked by the SPADATS network, journeying into near and deep space, and returning. He has been seen cavorting with strange beasts and people in mid-air.

How is this possible?

The popular press tries to tell us that Kal-El simply leaps. He takes a running start and then jumps to his destination, because he is so much stronger than we are.

O.K. Try an experiment. Find a park or athletic area and try the running broad-jump. Mark your take-off and landing points, and then mark the mid-point of your 'flight.' Now go back and try the jump again, but this time, when you reach the middle of the flight, change course 90°. Right or left, it doesn't matter.

Problem? You can't materially

change direction while in mid-air? In that case, neither could Kal-El, were he merely jumping.

Another problem. Have you ever jumped off something and had that something move backward with as much energy as you moved forward? In terms of physics, you have hit the problem of action and reaction. To throw yourself 20 feet forward, you must apply force to whatever you're pushing off from. If it happens to weigh the same as you do, and is free to slide, you will travel only 10 feet, and it will travel backward 10 feet. Now, if you jump off with the force to carry you from Metropolis to Sheboygan, you are exerting one tremendous amount of force on your starting point. If you should happen to try this from a building, you are apt to find yourself in Des Moines instead, and your former building in 6 different counties: it would disintegrate.

Jumping is not a viable mode of transport for Kal-El.

But he does fly, and well, and does perform mid-course maneuvers.

The secret may lie not in his super-musculature, but in his super-mind.

For centuries mankind has been seeing strange floating apparitions. Some of these seem to be people or bodies wafting gently along on the evening breeze. Modern investigators looking into such phenomena have been quite interested in these visible effects, and their probable causes.

Research has shown that man, under certain stimuli, can change his apparent body weight. In some cases, men have seemed to mentally affect their velocity in freefall: several sky-divers and military personnel have experienced total or near-total failure of their parachute systems at great altitudes, and yet have walked away from their touchdown points with little injury. One explanation of their survival has been that a body falling freely will only accelerate to a certain speed, and then wind resistance will balance gravity. You can not fall faster than that terminal velocity.

That maximum velocity is approximately 120 miles an hour. Hitting anything more substantial than a mountain of cotton at that velocity will definitely be terminal. Yet, people have fallen free for thousands of feet and walked away. How?

Research into extra-sensory phenomena and para-normal abilities has produced at least a name, if not a detailed *Modus Operandi*: levitation. Levitation is simply the power of the

human (or alien) mind to free the body from the bonds of gravity, the power to float, if not to fly outright. Under extreme conditions of jeopardy, or in deep trance, men have been known to levitate. From simple free floating to actual flying is a relatively small step. Or leap.

Even the starting leap Kal-El uses to begin his flights tends to make sense in this fashion: it gives his mind a definite sense of initial direction to his flight. A starting vector to follow with mind power.



Another key to the powers of the Kryptonian is his ability to affect large objects. To deflect or reverse the course of 20 tons of granite, personified in say, a statue of General Grant, considerable outside force must be applied. To simply lift such a weighty object takes considerable energy, yet Kal-El has been seen and photographed doing just that. Assuming he were to hold the 20 ton statue over his head with just incredible bodily strength, he would encounter problems. Just standing, his feet would tend to sink into the earth, or asphalt or even solid concrete (assuming a standard sidewalk). Catching such an object incorrectly while it was falling from any great height would shatter it, leaving many large, heavy objects falling, instead of one. Yet, we have pictures of Kal-El apparently catching it by the base, while the whole

thing was at an angle, and it did not shatter.

He has been seen and photographed catching aircraft by projecting appendages (wing tips, tails, wheels) and drastically deflecting the object's course. While an aircraft may be strong enough to take the normal stresses encountered in flight, they tend to break when handled carelessly—by wing tips, tails, or wheels! Yet these craft held together. HOW?

Just how much stronger a native Kryptonian would tend to be than a Terran would depend on the difference in gravity, of course, and on that we have little direct evidence or information. I would tend to say the differences would not be too extreme, or the physical structure of Kal-El himself would differ markedly from ours. There is only so much variation possible, by evolutionary principles, for an organism that eats the kind of food we do, and thrives. Kal-El must therefore be structurally and organically much like us. Thus, his strength and his other capabilities must rely on a superior MENTAL structure.

Para-normal research has given us another label and definition: Telekinesis—the ability of the mind to manipulate physical objects directly, without physical contact. A telekinetic can cause furniture or other objects to sail around a room by force of mind alone. This is the (or one of the) easiest explanations of the 'poltergeist' phenomena: objects flying wildly around a home without being physically touched. This is the phenomena commonly attributed to 'ghosts' in folk lore. Many modern researchers, however, have traced the effect to minor inhabitants of the victim houses. Disturbed children seem to be the cause; the poltergeist effect is their way of releasing hostilities and achieving childish ends.

What if this effect could be harnessed by an adult mind of good will? Used by a benevolent mind, it could halt crashing aircraft, or falling General Grants.

Apply the power of telekinesis to Kal-El's observed abilities. Mind force, or T.K. (a short form for telekinesis) could grasp all of an object at once and manipulate it. Perhaps being in contact with an object helps Kal-El's mind to 'tune in' on it. He is not really grasping General Grant's statueque base, he is simply making physical contact the better to get a mental grasp on it. The same would apply to other cases of 'super-

strength.' Lifting' a large object, Kal-El would touch it to get its mental feel, and then telekinetically manipulate it.

This power would also be an assist in his own 'flying.' He could use his T.K. to boost his aerial velocity past that of sound. He could change course by manipulating his own body as he manipulates other objects, or use it as an extremely long 'arm' to grasp hold of some remote object and pull himself around.



Super Breath

T.K. would also explain the observed capacity for a 'super shout' or 'super breath.' Given a body much like our own, he would only have so much available lung capacity. He could only inhale about the same amount of air as we can. He could thus only expel as much air as a normal human could. Extreme strength could allow this air to exit at great pressure, but there would still not be much of it. Also he could not inhale enormous volumes of air as he has been reported to have done.

Kal-El could, however, use his T.K. to manipulate large masses of air and seem to be inhaling or exhaling on a grand scale. The effects would be about the same.



Heat Vision

Another skill of the Man of Steel seems linked to the T.K. effects. Kal-El has been observed, on occasion, to ignite objects or warm them seemingly by looking at them. Media representatives have revealed to us their interpretation of this effect: he uses his 'heat vision' to project light or heat (much like an organic searchlight) toward a remote object. If this were truly the case, he would have to generate tremendous temperatures in the retina of each eye, focus the resulting infra-red light or energy with his corneas, and stare at the target. Keeping in mind that Kal-El

seems to have melted steel this way, the amount of heat his retinal areas would have to generate would be fantastic. All of the heat reaching a remote beam or wall would start in a 1/8" diameter area then beam forth. Allowing for losses in the air and reflection, the temperature of Kal-El's retinae would exceed 2000° Fahrenheit. He would indeed have to be made of incredibly tough stuff to survive this, aside from the fact that most retinae do not generate heat in any appreciable amount.

A more rational answer would seem to lie in telekinetically increasing the energy levels in matter in random directions to give the same effect as applying direct heat. The mind could serve as a control center aligning outside energy, say tapped from sunlight or circumambient heat, rather than having to originate such energy within itself.

Even beyond that, Kal-El's mind could simply weaken the looser molecular bonds in matter and allow it to temporarily change into a semi-fluid state, rather than a thermally active molten state.

Either explanation seems better than the idea of a man with incendiary eyeballs.



X-Ray Vision

A second vision-linked capability is 'X-ray vision'. Media men describe the effect as like that achieved using X-ray examining equipment to see through walls and into objects. Except for the small problem of generating a source of X-rays behind the object to be examined, this is not too completely wild. The human eye is capable of picking up images formed by many different frequencies of electromagnetic radiation. Extending this sensitivity is quite possible. Devices to see by infra-red or ultra-violet light are in common use today. Radar 'sees' ultra-high frequency radiation. Unfortunately, strictly organic substances do not seem that adaptable to sensing and interpreting data from ultra-high frequency sources. An organic phosphorescent substance or fluorescent material could be incorporated into Kal-El's retinae, and could respond to X-rays, but his

corneas would still have to focus them. The geometry of the eye is not suited to such manipulation, nor is it sufficiently dense to materially effect the course of X-rays.

In short: there are large problems with true 'X-ray vision'. A different effect does seem to fit the pattern, however. For millennia some people have claimed to be able to see events happening at tremendous distances, around the curve of the earth, or inside distant buildings or mountains. The effect is commonly called Clairvoyance in the world of psychic research. It means, simply, the ability to sense directly with the mind, or optic system, events or objects at a distance, or hidden from the observer. This is one of the basic abilities tested for with the use of the famous Rhine Card Deck.

These cards are printed with circles, wavy lines, squares, stars, etc., and can be used to test many types of Psi abilities. In testing for clairvoyance, the dealt cards are not seen by anyone, but receive the concentrated attention of the testee. He then attempts to state the pattern on the card.

Different techniques are used to make sure he is simply sensing the cards at that time, rather than merely foretelling which will be revealed in the future. That is a different power and the two are sometimes tricky to differentiate.

Clairvoyance would tend to provide the same effect as X-ray vision and would also cover telescopic vision, or the ability to see things at a distance. The latter is also in the catalogue of super powers, and accurately fits the analysis of Kal-El's real abilities.



Super Hearing

Another sense-related capability is 'super-hearing' or the ability to hear a pin drop in a boiler factory a half-mile away. Some of the events of super-sensing involving sound indicate incredible sensitivity to sound, as well as incredible information-processing abilities on the part of the auditory centers of the brain. To hear very soft sounds, acute hearing is mandatory. Unfortunately, in living beings, many slight sounds are masked by the

body's internal noise: blood pumping, breath hissing, muscle sliding, etc. Extremely complex auditory filtering is necessary in the centers of the brain to get rid of the background noise and pick out meaningful intelligence. All of this is quite within the realm of physical possibility. However...

Krypton is rumored to have been a higher G world than Earth. It was supposed to have a greater gravity pull than our planet. It would then tend to also have a denser atmosphere. Gravity, after all, tends to collect gasses and vapors released by volcanic activity, or passing by on the solar wind (this is what turns Venus into a virtual furnace): gravity collecting gasses which cause tremendous pressure and temperature. Krypton, then, could be expected to have an atmosphere denser than our own world's.

Dense gases transmit sounds better than thin ones. This is a simple and observable fact. Krypton's atmosphere would then tend to conduct sound better and more quickly than Earth's. This would probably place less evolutionary emphasis on extreme sensitivity of hearing, and would probably allow a Kryptonian to hear, in his own atmosphere, about as well as a Terran in his.

Unfortunately, when you transplant a Kryptonian to Earth, his less developed sense of hearing would be less acute than ours.

Oops.

Clairaudience is the Psi power that allows a person to hear things happening at a distance. It is documented as existing, but rather less often than most other extraordinary phenomena. Clairaudience, however, would explain the extraordinary hearing abilities observed in our expectably hard-of-hearing Kal-El. Sensing with the mind rather than the ears, Kal-El would indeed have acute hearing.



Super Speed

One definite effect of evolving in a heavier gravity field than Earth's would be a heightening of innate speed in reflexes. In a higher G environment, things fall faster within a given distance. An apple rolling off a

table on Krypton would hit the ground sooner, and be moving faster than an identical apple from an identical table on Earth. To cope with this greater speed, a Kryptonian would tend to develop faster reflexes to be able to scoop up that apple before it hit. How much faster, of course, depends on how great the gravity difference is. This would tend to account for reports of Kal-El's 'super-reflexes': a genetic heritage from his home world, coupled with practice and experience on Earth.



Invulnerability



The last outstanding capability of the Man of Steel is that of his invulnerability. From films and photographs, we have seen Kal-El surviving things that would totally destroy any normal human.

He has stood in the midst of fires and ignored them. He has been immersed in molten metal and later broken out. He survives avalanches and volcanic eruptions, the pressures of the deep-sea bottoms and the airless void of space. He shrugs off lightning bolts and handles high voltage lines without harm. And thrives. Bullets seem to bounce off him, and knives shatter against his body. Invulnerable. How?

Combine all his observed mental powers. Levitation, telekinesis, clairaudience, clairvoyance, and strongly developed reflexes. They are the explanation. His powers can turn away

heat and deflect molten metal and boulders. He can surround himself with atmosphere in deep space, hold off the ocean and filter out oxygen, shatter objects and stop their pieces in mid-air, sense bullets or other objects moving toward him and cancel their momentum so they fall, spent, at his feet.



Kryptonite

The combined mental forces of Kal-El render him impervious to physical harm. But do they leave him open to other forms of injury?

Kryptonite: a green or red glowing substance, apparently fragments of shattered Krypton, seems to have the power to render Kal-El helpless, or to work strange changes on his body and mind.

The green form seems to be deadly to him, acting like a damping field to his life force. Many times this substance has nearly done in Kal-El, both as randomly encountered fragments and as intentionally manipulated by his enemies.

The red form seems capable of altering his physical capabilities and altering his mental power by its mere presence. Such changes are unpredictable and erratic, and usually reversible.

How do they work on Kal-El? Are they really parts of lost Krypton?

Allow that Kal-El has extremely advanced Psi capabilities. He can sense things ordinary man cannot. He is extremely sensitive to Psi phenomena. And he is one of the very few survivors of his entire race.

In any normal human, being the only survivor of some great disaster imposes severe mental strain. Guilt is a common manifestation, as is suicide, or extreme dedication to some outside or altruistic cause in an attempt to justify the survival. (This may account for Kal-El's crusade on Earth: guilt for surviving.)

In a para-normal human, this psychological effect could be amplified. The presence of some fragment of his dead and blasted homeworld could effect Kal-El violently and possibly fatally. Mental shock would result—a terrifying psychological blasting.

(Continued on page 54)



DAVE BECK



A Nostalgic
Visit with...

SUPERMAN



THE ANIMATED KRYPTONIAN

In many ways more interesting
than his present Saturday morning image.

Article by ERIC HOFFMAN

In 1941, Republic Pictures issued its annual brochure of upcoming productions to theater exhibitors all over the country. But this time, there was a special addition to its usual planned lineup of dramas, westerns and serials. A two-page announcement heralded plans for a serial built



around exploits of National Comics' powerhouse super-hero, Superman!

At the same time, however, Paramount Pictures had put in its own bid to National (while Republic was in negotiation with the publishing firm) for the right to use the Man of Steel in a series of animated cartoons to be made by the Fleischer studios.

Just what Republic's proposed Superman serial would have been like can only be speculated upon. But the end result was that Republic and National Comics came to a parting of the ways during negotiations.

There have been various factors, rumored or stated, that may have contributed to this. Jerry Siegel, Superman's co-creator, has said that at the time Paramount and Republic were competing for the rights to Superman, he (Siegel) was asked which format would be the best showcase for the Man of Steel. Siegel opted for animation.

Then there was the matter of control over the serial. Gary Grossman, in his book *SUPERMAN: Serial to Cereal*, noted that "Republic was not willing to give up control to the omnipresent comic book owners, who insisted on absolute control of script and production. It wasn't Republic's style to submit . . ."

Paramount's bid was finally accepted and the Man of Steel was placed in the hands of the Fleischer animators and technicians at the studio in Miami, Florida.

The series of 17 cartoons that emerged are now considered classics, as well as a testimony to the skill and talent of the Fleischer people; they were certainly a radical departure for the company that gave audiences such humorous cartoon characters as Popeye, Betty Boop, Bimbo the dog, Koko the Clown, etc.

Certain factors are immediately noticeable upon viewing any of the cartoons. The first is that the figures of Clark Kent/Superman and Lois Lane are very true to the style of the strip as drawn by Joe Shuster. Jerry Siegel had the answer for this. According to Siegel, Shuster was flown to the Fleischer set-up, leaving behind "model" sheets of the characters' appearance. Judging from the reactions of fans, the artists must have

followed Shuster's concepts closely.

Then there was the remarkable attention to detail and the almost (at times) mind-blowing use of color. Certain moments from the 7 color cartoons presently available stick in the memory: the use of red in *Bullet-eers*, or the silver/gold radiance of the mad scientist's death ray in the first Superman film; the almost electric blue or glowing reds in *The Mummy Strikes* and the almost psychedelic use of colors in the human sacrifice sequence in *Jungle Drums*.

Sammy Timberg's original music added to the excitement, from the many bits of action music, to the mood-inducing mysteriosos, as well as that special theme that heralded Clark Kent changing into Superman, whether it be in a phone booth or even a taxi-cab.

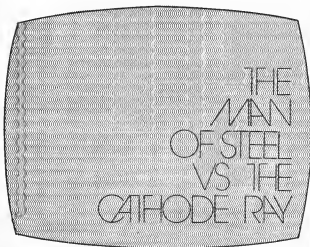
Humor popped up in the films, ranging from visual (the almost human raven in the first cartoon) to sly (the dormant volcano seen through a ship's porthole, in *Volcano*, looking exactly like Paramount's famed mountain logo) to groaning-funny (Lois's one liner, on being asked how she knew Clark was at the museum in *Mummy Strikes*, "My mummy done told me."). But at heart, it never interfered with the story line, merely helped accent the friendly rivalry between Kent and Lois.

Through the 17 cartoons, Superman had his hands full coping with foes ranging from the fantastic and monstrous (an army of giant robots, a prehistoric monster, a giant gorilla, bird-men) to gangsters to agents of the Axis Powers, both German and Japanese.

With the final entry, *Secret Agent*, the Man of Steel flew off into the sky, saluting the American Flag in mid-flight; an appropriately patriotic note to the popular super-series.

Available in the past only in black-and-white, the Paramount/Fleischer adventures of Superman have gradually been resurfacing in color once again. To date, seven of the seventeen mini-epics have turned up, with the promise of more to come, giving today's fans a chance to see just what all the excitement was about regarding a very unique animated series that stands alone in its category. ■





Article by IRV KARCHMAR



Above, George Reeves and Phyllis Coates watch the skies, while above right, George and Noel Neill try to please everybody (the wink indicates success). On the right-hand page, from left to right, Superman dives toward the welcome mattress, and George Reeves as Clark Kent mugging for the camera between takes.

When George (Bessolo) Reeves committed suicide on June 16, 1959, the news was greeted with a mixture of shock and grim amusement. Children were shocked that Superman could actually die (a popular joke afterwards was that Reeves had used a kryptonite bullet); adults knowledgeable in the ways of human weakness understood that Reeves was only human, and also, that he was in probably the most emotional profession possible, especially after being typecast so strongly in a particular role.



Many people close to him theorized that his death was not the result of a melancholy depression, however, since he was planning to direct rather than star in future productions (as he did in the last three episodes of Superman). He was also going to be married in two days, and it is problematic whether that would lead to depression. More significantly, George Reeves was in a serious automobile accident just two weeks earlier and had suffered an extremely painful brain concussion. He was having violent headaches because of

it, and was drinking a great deal besides taking the painkillers prescribed by his doctor—a combination known to cause emotional instability.

Yet, these facts must surely be only part of the story. Reeves was a fine athlete who gave up a boxing career (at his mother's insistence) to go into acting. For years he was on the fringes of theatre and film, starring and getting good notices in theatre, but playing only small bit parts in the movies (including, of course, Brent Tarleton in *Gone With The Wind*). When the role of Superman came

to the rest of the cast—Lois, Jimmy, Perry—who, by the nature of the show and its audience, had to ham it up in every episode. It also may have been because Reeves was much taller than the rest of the regular cast. In any event, what came forth was a beautifully subdued performance each week, so subdued in fact that at times it appeared that Reeves was too casual, as if he were unconsciously conveying—from the tightness of his smile (he never laughed on the show) and the matter-of-fact way in which he dispatched the villains just in the

history. He was known the world over as Superman, what else could he be.

Many people would say, so what? He could do other things. That may be true, but it must be remembered that George Reeves paid his dues in the old days of Hollywood, seeing people he had performed with in summer stock (like Victor Mature and Robert Preston) go on to become big stars. It must have grieved him to the heart to know that he was as good, or even better than they were, and yet could never be a star performer because of the color of his leotards.



along he might not have realized that it was going to be the focal point of his life, indeed, it would overtake his own identity.

George Reeves, it should be noted, was not only a kind and generous person, well-liked by those around him, but also an excellent actor. In fact, he was much too good an actor to play a one-dimensional character such as Superman. Watching the television shows closely, one can see the almost calm dignity he brought to the role, even when portraying Clark Kent. This may have been due in part

to the rest of the cast—that he was indeed too good for the damn kiddie show.

After the program left the air, his career came to a halt. Many sources disagree with this, but doing department store promotions, playing in summer stock, appearing at state fairs, or receiving an offer to become a professional wrestler could not be considered anything but demeaning by him. He was too good an actor to be stuck playing Superman, but since the money was so good he did it anyway, and then found himself probably the most typecast performer in

Perhaps it is stretching a point, but Superman killed himself just as he was about to outlive his time. Truth, Justice, and the American Way were soon to be replaced by Elvis, rock 'n' roll, the civil rights movement, and a decade of social disorder over Vietnam, the bomb, and a hundred other causes. The children that grew up watching Superman would no longer accept the myth of the American Way at face value. George Reeves may have killed himself just as both he, and the character he portrayed, were about to become outdated. ■



SUPERBEINGS

THAT ALMOST WERE



The year after *Superman* finally went off television, its producer, Whitney Ellsworth, tried to spin-off another tv show based on its characters, but in a more juvenile vein. Using basically the same production crew, the ill-fated pilot starred Billy Curtis as Bark Bent and *Superpup*, Ruth Delfino as Pamela Poodle and Angelo Rossitto as Perry Bite. Fortunately, the show never went beyond the pilot.

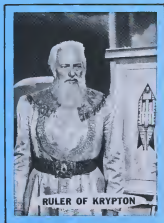
Superboy was another matter, however. Thirteen scripts were written in 1962, and Whitney Ellsworth was still the producer. Johnny Rockwell portrayed Superboy and Bunny Henning played Lana Lang. The show lacked production values and an interested audience. Wisely, it never went beyond the pilot.

Above, Billy Curtis dresses as *Superpup*, with Ruth Delfino as *Pamela Poodle*. At left, Johnny Rockwell as *Superboy* about to take flight, and, at right, *Superboy* urges a villain to surrender, or else.



SUPERMAN'S BUBBLE GUM FLASHBACK!

A 50'S TRADING CARD GALLERY



RULER OF KRYPTON

Ruler, leader of Krypton (Robert Newton), is skeptical of Jor-El's rocket design, and his prediction of doom.



JOR-EL ON KRYPTON

Jor-El (Richard Widmark) looks on with concern, anticipating the Kryptonian civilization.



DESTINATION: EARTH

Jor-El and Lara (Aline Towne) prepare to send their son to Earth.



SUPERMAN'S PARENTS

Jor-El and Lara (Aline Towne) look on with concern, anticipating the Kryptonian civilization.



ROCKET FROM KRYPTON

The rocket contains Jor-El's (Richard Widmark) son, as he is sent to Earth.



SUPERMAN AS A BABY

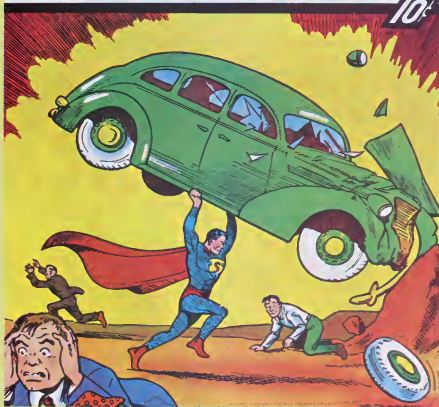
Clark and his adoptive parents, Mr. and Mrs. Kent, decide to adopt him.

No. 1

JUNE, 1938

ACTION COMICS

10¢



THE TRUE ORIGINS OF SUPERMAN

JERRY SIEGEL



JOE SHUSTER



Article by ALEX EISENSTEIN

Superman was born in 1933, on a hot summer night in Cleveland, Ohio. But he did not appear before the public until the summer of '38, in the premier issue of *Action Comics*. His seventeen-year-old creator, Jerry Siegel, spent a sleepless night dreaming up the story of the Man of Steel, every couple of hours hopping from his bed to set his ideas down on paper. At dawn, he rushed the completed script over to his close friend and collaborator, Joe Shuster, who lived about a mile away. Shuster loved the idea, and immediately they set to work devising a comic strip from the rough draft, using Shuster's rough-and-ready drawing skills. Thus was Superman born before breakfast from the hearts and minds of two teenage science fiction fans.

Shuster and Siegel met as a result of their correspondence in the letter-columns of *Amazing Stories*, The first true SF magazine. Soon they got together to produce two amateur

magazines in imitation of *Amazing*, called *Cosmic Stories* and *Cosmic Stories Quarterly*. According to Sam Moskowitz, a leading historian of the field, these are the earliest amateur

**For five years
Shuster & Siegal's
Superman strip
was rejected as
immature and
crudely drawn.**

journals devoted to science fiction. In October, 1932, they used a mimeograph to issue another amateur magazine devoted to publishing SF, calling it, simply enough, *Science Fiction*. This was in reaction to the leading SF "fanzine" of the day, *The Time Traveller*, co-edited by Mort

Weisinger, ... who wound up, in 1941, with a job at D.C. editing *Supermen*. Somehow Joe and Jerry never managed to get away from good old Mort, who was selling SF to the pulps years before they managed to sell *Supermen* to Harry Donenfeld. Weisinger went on to be a literary agent and pulp editor before being offered the job on *Supermen*.

For five years Shuster and Siegel submitted versions of their *Supermen* strip to all of the newspaper comic syndicates, which invariably rejected them as immature and crudely drawn, and for not having "extraordinary appeal"—this from an editor at the Bell Syndicate. In the meantime, they both hired on to do comic book work for Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson, under Harry Donenfeld, doing various cops-and-robbers books like *Siem Bradley*, *Federal Men*, *Radio Squed*, and so forth. Apparently they never gave a thought to showing their special brainchild to their bosses.

Eventually Donenfeld took over the whole operation, recognizing it as the Harry Donenfeld Comic Book Company, or "DC Comics" as it came to be known. The first issue of *Defective Comics* appeared in March of 1937, with old standbys like Slam Bradley, but Donenfeld was on the lookout for new material. Meanwhile, Siegel and Shuster had dusted off *Superman* one more time to send it to M.C. Gaines at the McClure Syndicate, though they had little hope of it being accepted. Indeed, Gaines considered the strip too outlandish for his newspaper line. But instead of simply rejecting it, he

Superman was not their first attempt to sell a comic strip. Early in '33, they sent a cartoon adaptation of a science fiction piece to *Wonder Stories*, only to have it returned with a comment that it was "mechanically inadvisable." This experience probably taught Siegel that one could not sell a straight adaptation, but he did not entirely forsee the inspiration of published SF. For years it has been rumored that *Superman* was an offshoot of Philip Wylie's 1930 novel *Gladiator*, the story of an individual granted colossal strength and virtual indestructibility by means of a prena-

Doc Savage, the pulp-hero super-scientist ("The Man of Bronze"), the original *Superman* concept is just as reminiscent of old-time ethnic folk-heroes like Mighty Joe Magarak. He might even have emerged from a Labor Movement poster of the 30's.

Of course, *Superman's* powers were much more limited in 1938 than they later became—they were precisely in fact, the powers and abilities of Hugo Danner, hero of *Gladiator*. Absent is x-ray vision, or any other form of super-sight. Also absent is the power of flight as such, though the comic hero, like Danner, is able to

Superman's powers in 1938 were precisely those of Hugo Danner, the hero of Philip Wylie's *GLADIATOR*.

forwarded *Superman* to Donenfeld, whom he knew needed material for a new book. And so *Superman* came full circle; Donenfeld bought the strip for \$130, including all rights, and Siegel and Shuster were set to work creating new *Superman* stories full time. That story was featured in *Action* #1 in June '38, and six months later, a more elaborate version was indeed distributed by the McClure Syndicate. The next summer *Superman* had his own book, and by 1940 it was selling 1,300,000 copies and its creators were earning a reported \$75,000.

tal serum. This attribution is largely confirmed by the fact that Wylie's book was lauded in a review by Siegel in his early fanzine. In fact, the original concept for *Superman* did not clothe him in the now-familiar skin-tight costume: an early sketch by Shuster depicts a beefy character in long pants and tank-top work shirt. He is holding a manaloft in his hands, while criminals behind fire a tripod-mount machine gun at his back. The caption reads: "A genius in intellect—A Hercules in strength—A nemesis to wrongdoers—the *Superman*!" While that may remind one of promo ads for

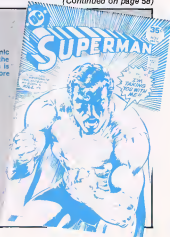
take mighty leaps into the air. The initial story in *Action* says "he could hurdle skyscrapers/leap an eighth of a mile/raise tremendous weights (depicted with upheld auto)/run faster than a streamline train/Nothing less than a bursting shell could penetrate his skin!" Eventually this became, "Faster than a speeding bullet, etc." on radio and television.

All the versions of *Superman's* origin agree that his powers derive in some wise from his home world, Krypton. Later accounts imply this is a function of the great mass and special composition of Krypton, (but) the first episode in *Action* is rather

(Continued on page 58)



SUPER GRAPHICS
A representation of the changes in comic style over the years shows the cover of the first comic (1938) in which Superman is featured (left) and a recent, much more graphic example of comic art.



Daily Planet

Article by TERRY PARKER

★ ★ ★ ★ FINAL

FROM THE 'FRONT PAGE' ERA OF YELLOW JOURNALISM TO THE INSTANT NEWS OF THE MODERN AGE

Forty years of Superman comes have brought innumerable changes not only to Metropolis and its inhabitants, but also to what is surely one of the world's most famous newspapers, the *Daily Planet*. This "great metropolitan newspaper" has almost become as important to the Superman mythos as the characters themselves.

There was never any doubt in Clark Kent's mind that the job of newspaperman would be the most

effective position from which to channel his super powers toward the benefit of mankind. Directly after the funeral of his foster parents, we find him trying to get a job as a reporter for the *Daily Star* and being turned down by its editor because of his lack of experience. He is hardly discouraged and resolves to get the job, because, as he reasons, "If I get news dispatches promptly, I'll be in a better position to help people." How he manages to

land the job and assume the persona of "mild mannered reporter" would make William Randolph Hearst proud—he made the news that he reported. This would prove through the years to be a major method of providing copy for Clark Kent's columns.

Needless to say, the city editor who shortly before refused Kent the job is ordering him to report to work. Upon arriving for his first day as a reporter, Kent is summoned to

the editor's office. He is given a steady assignment, covering reports that "a fellow with gigantic strength named Superman actually exists." Kent couldn't ask for anything better and he is beaming as he answers, "Listen, Chief, if I can't find out anything about this Superman, no one can!" The *Daily Star* would never be the same.

He's reporting skills proved to be so fine that by 1939 he is now

(Continued next page)

SUPERMAN DEMOLISHES RADIOACTIVE KILLER BEES

Story on Page 5

ARCH-CRIMINAL LUTHOR WINS PRISON PAROLE 'HE IS A CHANGED MAN!' SAYS WARDEN

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur incididunt ut labore et dolore veniam, quis nostrud exercitation commodo consequat. Duis aute esse molestiae consequat, vel illum et iusto odio dignissim qui blandit excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat r deserunt mollit anim id est laborum distinct. Nam liber tempor cum sol quod maxiam placet fieri possim Temporibus autem quibusd et aut

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PLANET REPORTER KENT WINS PULITZER PRIZE

er epuland sint et molestia non delectus au aut prefer cadis dol quid est cur veretur ne ad cam non memore tum etia ergat. Nos ar cum conscient to factor tum pos pecun modus est neque nonor ir nulla praed om undant. Improb p docecedesse videnteur. Inviat q fidem. Neque hominy infant aut

BOY, 11, SPOTS UFO... 'LIKE A CITY IN THE SKY' SAYS LITTLE STEVIE SPIELBERG

Story in Suburban Section Page 8



being sent overseas for the *Daily Star*, but for the *Evening News* in Cleveland, Ohio. A formidable reporter indeed, he is apparently freelancing around Europe. By 1940 however, Kent was settled down permanently in Metropolis, and his columns are a blurbark of the *Daily Planet*.

Just what kind of paper is the *Daily Planet*? Here is a sampling of the banner headlines that have stretched across its front page: "Amazing War Pictures," "Sabotage Attempt on Panama Canal Fails" (thanks to the intervention of Superman, of course), "Daring Prison Break," "Mad Killer on the Loose." Sensational, right? These are the kinds of stories that soon have newsboys (who wear hats like Sluggo) standing on the street corners of Metropolis yelling, "Extra! *Daily Planet* Extra! Superman smashes saboteurs!"

Eventually even Perry White is exhorting his ace reporters, Clark Kent and Lois Lane, to ease up on the bombast, "Look at that front page! Murder! Robbery! Are we running a yellow journal? Can't we ever have a nice human interest story? After all, life has its tender magic too!" But he hasn't seen anything yet.

By 1950 White is throwing Kent's copy into the wastebasket and admonishing him with, "Clark—this is a newspaper—not a science fiction magazine! Get down to 10th and Western and cover that fire, if you want to keep working here!" The tagline on this discarded story reads, "Martian Menace Genuine." In any sense of yellow journalism, the *Daily Planet* was ahead of its time.

The *Daily Planet* has never underestimated its readers' taste—it probably would not print a story like "Mafia Informer's Tongue Nailed to 2 by 4!" and run a picture with it—but their reading public must have certainly questioned its credibility often over the years. Here is a bid for the *Planet's* all-time idiotic headline, "Superman Proves Tritone Larger Than Gigantosaur." I'm sure that all of their readers were happy to learn that matter was



SUPERMAN AIDS DAILY PLANET CHARITY DRIVE

Eciamen nescie erim haec movere potest appetit animi sed ullam habet letum pellat peccato expetere ea in errorem at ille pellit sensus lapsum epicure semper hoc ut provent pavallum. For manna doler, non ne expetere ea in monum sit et parvos ad se allocare et studij non illa stabili in tant in estinam Eciamen nescie

settled once and for all. At its worst the *Daily Planet* is a generally disreputable newspaper. The people who buy it are probably most interested in sports, or they want the classifieds, movie schedules, or the food section.

The first thing a newspaperman learns is that journalism is not a profession but a business. And it is a business in which the news that is sold today is the paper that wraps tomorrow's garbage. What is important in the newspaper business is that it should take a whole day for it to become garbage. It is something of a tradition in drama and literature to focus on a newspaper reporter as a gloriously hard-bitten hero. He may be cynical, but only because of the world's indifference to truth, beauty, justice and art. The

actual work of a reporter for a daily newspaper is no more exalted than that of a clerk in a supermarket, except for the inside knowledge of the city that he or she acquires, and most of the stories that rolled out of Clark Kent's typewriter ended up being exactly the kind of thing that yells at you in the supermarket, in 60 point headlines, as you stand in the checkout line. After writing this kind of sensational drivel, it's a wonder that Kent doesn't spend a lot of time after work doing a lot of hard, two-fisted drinking. It certainly takes a superman to obtain.

When one notes the proliferation of tabloid rags that fill the newsstands and food stores today, it is not surprising that the *Daily Planet* has lasted through the years. If Superman wasn't providing Clark

Kent with "scoops" (as they are so fond of calling them at the *Planet*) they probably relied on pictures of cuddly kittens and puppies, or predictions by leading psychics.

Eventually the *Daily Planet* captured the attention of, and finally was captured by, that phenomena of our time, the conglomerate. In the early 70's the paper was bought out by the Galaxy Broadcasting System, bringing a new aspect to the Superman saga. This huge corporation is none other than a comics version of a Warner Communications Company or a Gulf & Western. They are businessmen who collect newspapers with the same ruthlessness that twelve-year-olds collect Superman comic books.

The fateful day of the *Planet's* sale is referred to by Superman



(with typical modesty) as "the end of an era" and the transformation of the "great metropolitan newspaper" to a mere appendage of Galaxy Broadcasting is presented with a nice bit of symbolism in a 1971 issue of *Superman*.

It is the "saddest day of Superman's career" when the huge symbol of the *Daily Planet* is being removed from the top of the newspaper building to be replaced with a huge TV antenna. Suddenly the chain carrying the giant ringed planet gives way, sending it hurtling toward the crowd of onlookers on the sidewalk below. But Superman has also been watching, and in a split second, he grabs the needlelike TV tower and spears the giant globe with it, his "super aim" guiding it safely toward an empty lot. As one of the people in the crowd exclaims, "What an arm!"

As soon as Superman has changed into his Clark Kent identity in a nearby alley, he keeps an appointment with the president of Galaxy Broadcasting, Morgan Edge. Edge is the personification of the vast corporation, a stude, avacious and sometimes sinister "big wheel," who constantly reminds his new employees that he is the boss. He wears tailored double-breasted suits and sports a Holly Golightly-length cigarette holder (a very delicate replacement for Perry White's omnipresent cigar—even the classic newspaper editor's trappings are usurped by the new management).

Edge's personality alone is enough to alienate his inherited *Daily Planet* staff, but to top things off, he has something against Superman! When Jimmy Olsen is bold enough to ask Edge what he has against Superman, Edge answers, "The same thing I'd have against anyone so supremely powerful. . . I don't trust anyone who can't be stopped! A wise man once said that 'power corrupts. . . and absolute power corrupts absolutely!' How do we know Superman will be any exception?"

As Kent keeps his appointment with Edge, in "the big wheel's swank suite," the drastic changes in store for the *Daily Planet* (as Edge would

MAN INVENTS BETTER MOUSE TRAP, WORLD BEATS PATH TO DOOR



Inventor C.R. Jones Guarantees New Laser Mouse Trap Will Do the Trick

probably say) become perfectly clear, "The *Planet* is a great sheet, but face it, Kent—newspapers are outdated! We're changing things! We're going to do a retired job on you, friend. Step into my private elevator, while I fill you in. The news moves so fast nowadays! Headlines can't wait! Our millions of TV viewers want their stories hot off the giddle! So I'm making you the first roving TV reporter in Metropolis!"

And that's not all. Edge gives Kent a "tolling newsroom . . . a souped-up mobile TV studio," and he assures Kent that he is getting enough "advanced equipment to make you a super reporter."

Kent's feeble objection, "But I'm a newspaper reporter," is characteristically dismissed by Edge with, "You're my employee—and you'll do well to remember it! If I say you're working for my television station, you are. Clear?"

After Kent's initial telecast his colleagues in the *Planet*'s city room are quick to respond with their opinions of his performance. Jimmy Olsen, typically loyal, thinks he did a "swell job" and Lois Lane, typically bitchy, still "prefers Walter Cronkite!" The only opinion that matters, of course, belongs to Morgan Edge, "I agree with Olsen! Kent did a superb job—and that's why I'm assigning him to WGBS—TV on a steady basis!"

At this announcement even Perry White takes umbrage, "See here,

Edge . . . I need Kent!"

"No Arguments, White! The matter is settled! You may be the editor—but I'm the boss!"

As H. L. Mencken observed, what keeps journalism from being a profession is that a newspaperman does not have clients, only a boss.

After Edge leaves, Kent wanders off alone through the old *Daily*

Planet building, pondering his new position. "Me, a TV reporter! I'll get around easier now, but I'll still miss the *Planet*! I'll miss the thunder of those presses . . . the smell of printer's ink! But times change . . . and even Superman has to change with them!"

This maudlin little bit of interior monologue contains a lot of baloney. No reporter ever gets anywhere near any kind of ink other than that which is in his ball point pen, and the thunder of presses will drive you deaf unless you wear ear protectors which are mandatory when the big things are rolling. Besides, reporters simply do not frequent the pressroom. Running the presses is probably the most thankless, dirty job at any major newspaper. The closest comparison is working in a coal mine.

The end of an era, indeed. The *Daily Planet* will still go on each day, and will still wrap tomorrow's garbage. And in the 1970's it costs (as do all "great metropolitan newspapers") 15¢.

INDIANA FUGITIVE DISAPPEARS NEAR DEVIL'S TOWER WYOMING... 'LUNATIC,' SAYS WIFE



Ectamen nescio enim hanc movere potest appetit animi sed ullam habet eromyar at ille peliti sensor luptas epicur semper hoc ut provert

TO FIGHT THOSE CRIMINALS BEST, YOU MUST HIDE YOUR TRUE IDENTITY! THEY MUST NEVER KNOW CLARK KENT IS A... A SUPER-MAN! REMEMBER, BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT YOU ARE... A SUPERMAN!

AND AS CLARK KENT WAS ORPHANED A SECOND TIME, HE KNEW THE COURSE HIS LIFE MUST TAKE...



... BUT WHEN I'M NEEDED, I'LL WEAR THIS COSTUME, AND THE WORLD WILL KNOW OF... SUPERMAN!!



Origins

(Continued from page 54)

vague on the matter. It compresses the entire "origin" into a single image in the splash panel, showing a small rocket escaping a nondescript orb. The legend reads: "Just before the doomed planet, Krypton, exploded to fragments, a scientist placed his infant son within an experimental

ers increased from issue to issue and returning to his roots in science fiction. Yet for all his temporary far-flung escapes, Superman remains a strangely earthbound figure, forever failing back on the staples of crimefighting and disaster control. A good half of his most fantastic adventures wind up as dreams or are otherwise illusory, especially if they mean any great change in the Earthly status quo. Now and then the films and TV series would reach out to embrace SF mot-

into other dimensions... returning to the wonder of the pulp era that brought together his young creators; year to year, but he did not actually begin to fly until he crossed over into other, more active media. With Bud Collyer's voice, Superman went on radio in February of 1940, and the second stanza of the lead-in, ("Look—up in the sky! etc.") and special effects of high-velocity winds, certainly suggested that his natural domain was high above everyone's

To remain a super-cop, and sometime super-janitor, has always been his super-curse. He couldn't even win WWII singlehanded.

rocket-ship, launching it toward Earth!" This single caption expands in the newspaper version into a series of strips detailing the life of Superman's parents on Krypton, the birth of their son "Kal-El," etc. Here, however, one is told that all the people of Krypton are Supermen—beings which represent the human race at its "ultimate peak of perfect development!" Jor-El zooms by faster than "the fastest express train" and then leaps "hundreds of yards into the air" to his penthouse balcony.

Not so gradually, Superman's pow-

ers, but even more than the comics, they stuck him in the soothing rut of setting right the workaday social wrongs. For all his magnificent prowess, which leaves open so many doors on the Universe at large, Superman nevertheless goes on bending steel in his bare hands and changing the course of occasional mighty rivers. But never the course of history, of course, nor the major aims of his own existence.

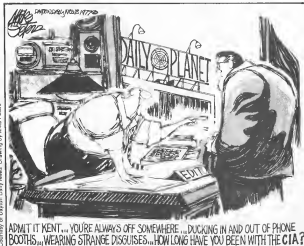
In the comics of the '50s, he flew off to other planets and alien cultures, and back and forth through time, and

head. But explicit flight waited on the first animated cartoons in '41, produced by Max Fleischer at Paramount. The animators decided that leaping tall buildings at a single bound would simply look silly, and so, from then on, the Man of Steel truly soared among the clouds, both in and out of the comics.

Such a fantastic creature, perhaps, cannot often chase after marvels, lest he tarnish his own marvelous presence. He must rule absolute in an ordinary world of Earth, Air, Fire and Water, a world in which he moves mountains but changes nothing. And if he vacations in another Galaxy, or goes hunting in the Jurassic, still he must return to Earth and America and Metropolis, once again to be put through the usual paces on the old, familiar treadmill.

To remain a super-cop, and sometime super-janitor, has always been his super-curse. Doubtless this is partly a hangover from the days when he was just improbably superhuman, rather than high-omnipotent. He remains the God who walks like a man, who pretends to be a man, and who cleans out noxious elements in the social body when and where they emerge, like a super white blood cell. Somehow, he couldn't even win World War Two singlehanded, though he did his level best.

And for all of this, the kids continue to buy his exploits for Truth, Justice, and the American Way. The same old candy sells to the same old sweet hungers, satisfying that child in all of us.



ADMIT IT KENT... YOU'RE ALWAYS OFF SOMEWHERE... DUCKING IN AND OUT OF PHONE BOOTHS... WEARING STRANGE DISGUISES... HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WITH THE CIA?

Kirk Alyn

(Continued from page 19)

"Where are the dummies. Get him the dummies."

FF: What about the new Superman, Christopher Reeves, did you meet him when you were filming?

ALYN: No, he was in London shooting with the second unit. We were in Canada shooting with the first unit. I did see a lot of stills of him, but I didn't see him work, although I read the whole script, and liked it very much. If everything is done the way it's written, and things look believable, it's going to be a helluva good picture. They're

FF: They had dummies already made?

ALYN: Oh, yeah, they had dummies, but I never used them. I carried real people all the time. I used to run up a flight of stairs with a girl in my arms. If you think that was easy, try running up a flight of stairs holding a fifty pound weight. Take two steps at a time, and try running up the stairs. She weighed about 98 to 110 pounds. That's another time the director says to me, after about six or seven times, "That would have been fine, but you're slowing down a little bit, Kirk." spending the money, taking their time, and doing everything perfect. They're perfectionists. They have to

be. After *Star Wars* it has to be good. **FF:** How is director Richard Donner to work with.

ALYN: He was a very fine fellow to work with. He's an actor's director, the kind that if you do it better than he told you, he'll leave it that way. He's very good. I love directors like this. When directors are sticklers and want you to do it exactly as they tell you, you can never do a good job. You don't feel it. But he'll let you go, and it looks good that way, that's the way they'll leave it.

FF: How many days did you shoot?

ALYN: We only shot one day, believe it or not, but we were there two weeks. We didn't shoot two weeks. We shot the last day of the two weeks.

FF: Do you know how much screen time you've got?

ALYN: We must have about five minutes. That's about all. Maybe a little bit longer because there will be cutaways. I'm playing the father of the little Lois Lane girl and we're sitting on the train. I was riding backward reading a magazine, and the little girl and her mother are facing me, riding forward. Now, the little girl is looking out of the window, and she sees a boy running alongside the train—running as fast as the train is going. That's about ninety miles an hour. It's a streamlined train. He not only runs, but when he sees the little girl looking at him, he shows-off a little bit, so he runs faster than the train. Then, he leaps over the train and lands on the other side. The little girl sees him, and is flabbergasted. She says, "Mommy, Mommy, there's a little boy who..." And, we don't believe her. I say, "Just read your book" and we just pacify her a little bit. So, with all this cut, I'd say it was about eight minutes. The fact is this is a vignette. It has nothing to do with the rest of the story. It's just this one thing by itself.

FF: Did they come and contact you, or did your agent set it up?

ALYN: No, they came and contacted me. It was to their advantage to have me in it, just to say I'm in it. They're going to do a big promotional scheme which they said I will be involved in prior to opening. They did a documentary besides shooting this picture. They had interviews and us doing various other little things.

FF: I heard that they're going to cut the picture into two separate movies.

ALYN: Well, they were shooting two pictures, but they stopped shooting the second one when they went over

The Superman Serials Produced by Sam Katzman for Columbia Pictures

1948—SUPERMAN

Chapter Titles

"Superman Comes to Earth"
"Depths of the Earth"
"The Reducible Ray"
"Man of Steel"
"A Job for Superman"
"Superman in Danger"
"Into the Electric Furnace"
"Superman to the Rescue"
"Invincible Force"
"Between Two Fires"
"Superman's Oath"
"Bliss in the Depths"
"Hurled to Destruction"
"Superman at Bay"
"The Payoff"

Superman/Clark Kent . . . Kirk Alyn
Lois Lane . . . Noel Neill
Jimmy Olsen . . . Tommy Bond
"Spider Lady" . . . Carol Forman
Drafter . . . George Mosier
Anton . . . Jack Ingram
Perry White . . . Pierre Watkin
Brook . . . Terry Frost
Conrad . . . Charles King
Dr. Hackett . . . Charles Osgley
Dr. Graham . . . Herbert Russell
Loada . . . Forrest Taylor
Morgan . . . Stephen Carr
Elton . . . Rusty Wescoatt
Jon-El . . . Nelson Leigh
Lara . . . Luana Patters
Eben Kent . . . Edward Cassidy
Martha Kent . . . Virginia Carroll
Clark Kent—boy . . . Alan Quinlan III
Clark Kent—teen-ager . . . Ralph Hodges
Rozell . . . Robert Barron
screenplay . . . Lewis Clay, Royal Cole
adapted for the screen by . . . George H. Plympton,
Joseph F. Pollard
directors . . . Spencer G. Bennett,
Thomas Carr
assistant director . . . R. M. Andrews
film editor . . . Earl Turner
director of photography . . . Ira H. Morgan, A.S.C.
musical director . . . Mischa Bakaleinikoff

1950—ATOM MAN VS. SUPERMAN

Chapter Titles

"Superman Flies Again"
"Atom Man Appears"
"Abdaze in the Sky"
"Superman Meets Atom Man"
"Atom Man Tricks Superman"
"Atom Man's Challenge"
"At the Mercy of Atom Man"
"Into the Empty Gloom"
"Superman Crashes Through"
"Atom Man's Heat Ray"
"Luthor's Strategy"
"Atom Man Strikes"
"Atom Man's Flying Saucer"
"Rocket of Vengeance"
"Superman Saves the Universe"

Superman/Clark Kent . . . Kirk Alyn
Lois Lane . . . Noel Neill
Luthor/Atom Man . . . Lyle Talbot
Jimmy Olsen . . . Tommy Bond
Perry White . . . Pierre Watkin
Foster . . . Jack Ingram
Albert . . . Con C. Harvey
Carl . . . Rusty Wescoatt
Baser . . . Terry Frost
Oorr . . . Wally West
Lawson . . . Paul Stader
Earl . . . George Robotham
The Mayor . . . William Fawcett
Man in the Street . . . Stanley Blystone
The Chief of Police . . . Fred Kelsey
screenplay . . . George H. Plympton,
Joseph Pollard, David Matthews
director . . . Spencer G. Bennett
second unit director . . . Owen Abrahams
assistant director . . . R. M. Andrews
director of photography . . . Ira H. Morgan, A.S.C.
sound . . . Josh Westmoreland
film editor . . . Earl Turner
musical director . . . Mischa Bakaleinikoff

(Continued on page 65)

Brought together by the film's key designer, Joe Johnston, **THE STAR WARS SKETCHBOOK** offers 65 drawings including the Imperial Star Destroyer, the Rebel Blockade Runner, the Death Star, the Millennium Falcon, the X-Wing Fighter, and much, much more!

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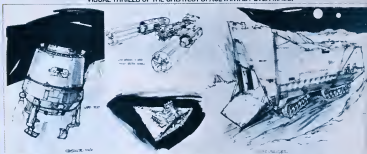
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- _____ Blueprints at \$6.95 each
- _____ Iron-On Transfers at \$6.95 each

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silent version

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silent version

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☐ color/sound films \$29.95 each.

I enclose \$_____ Total (Check or
Money Order ONLY).
(Illinois residents please add 5% sales tax.)
(Please allow 2-3 weeks delivery.)

NAME _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____



FAN SCENE

The FAN SCENE is a potpourri of events and people who are involved in science fiction and fandom. If you would like to submit any information regarding your club, starbase, etc., or any photos, cartoons, coming events, etc., send it (along with a SELF-ADDRESSED, STAMPED ENVELOPE) to: FANTASTIC FILMS FAN SCENE, 2701 W. HOWARD ST., CHICAGO, ILL. 60645.



IMAGINEERING

Imagineering is a new fan-type of magazine published by Advanced Technology Research Associates in Minnesota. Devoted to the techy side of fandom, its articles range from sf futurism to robotics, space colonies and home computers. It is published quarterly and subscriptions are \$2.00 per year, or 50c per copy. Send to ATRA, P.O. Box 456, Minneapolis, Minn. 55440. In case you're wondering, the cover illustrates a hypothetical 3-D computerized space war game.

SOLAR SAILORS



*Gods of my ancestors, guide my hands,
Here on the borders of our sky,
Guarding beyond our known home lands,
Give me the strength to fight and die.*

*Somewhere beyond these ranks of stars
My strange ships of our alien foe,
Armed with knowledge that is not ours,
Steered by ethics we do not know.*

—Neutral Zone, Romulan View

A new Chicago area group that specializes in space songs, the Deborn Crew have just pressed their first album, *Solar Sailors*. Many of their

FUTURE NEWS

The *Futurist* is the monthly magazine published by the World Future Society, a Washington based association for the study of alternative futures. The magazine presents a literate and scholarly view of the social, economic,

environmental and technological problems and alternatives that face us in the near tomorrow. For more information, contact the World Future Society, 4916 St. Elmo Ave. (Bethesda), Washington, D.C. 20014.



folksongs are based on themes from *Star Trek*, such as the one below. More information is available from The Bandersnatch Press, 2100 N. Halsted, Chicago, Ill. 60614.

CONFUSION PI



The scene was real confusion at the Confusion Pi SF Convention in Ann Arbor, Michigan, which took place the weekend of January 13th, at the Ann Arbor Inn. The hotel was a bit perturbed at the convention antics and all-night partying, and stormtroopers dressed in blue were called to the scene more than once to quell the light sabre duels and general rowdiness. In short, a good time was had by all. Above left, Darth Vader is surrounded by tiny fans while, above right, Tullio Pironi of General Technics (which engineered the robot on this issue's back cover) ponders the scene. Below middle, a beautifully done Greedo from Star Wars slithers into view and, below bottom, a Kazin from the Ringworld books poses for the camera.



A reader in Japan sent us a copy of one of their popular movie and media publications called, we believe, Roadshow. The captions are anybody's guess. >



POWERS

(Continued from page 44)

This would be sufficient to account for his reaction.

But he is also Psi sensitive.

In the death by violence of an entire race of sentient beings, their emotional scream of mortal agony would impress itself on the very rock of their world. Their terror and death-shock would permeate every atom of Krypton, and remain to haunt anyone sensitive enough to pick it up from a piece of Krypton. To a native of the world, somehow surviving, this, in itself, would be enough to kill. That would seal the fate of Kal-El, should he remain too long in contact with it. His best hope of surviving would be to get away from the stuff, or to get it away from him. Distance seems to provide a buffer, as does lead. (This lends support to the observation that his powers do not work well through lead: he cannot clairvoy into a lead box for instance.)

The effects of red Kryptonite may be due to differences in chemical composition or atomic structure since it passed through a red space cloud, combined with Kal-El's sensitivity. Or the effect might be a psychological variation.

Consider: the planet Krypton was composed of a finite amount of matter. Given its violent disruption, much of that matter could have been thrown out of its solar system. Given escape velocity relative to the Kryptonian sun, the fragments could spread throughout a large volume of space.

However, the dispersion of matter would leave very little actual mass in any given volume of space, and that matter would be moving at sub-light velocity. Unless fragments were somehow pulled along with Kal-El's escape craft, it is highly unlikely that much but micropowder would ever reach Earth's solar system. It is possible that some part of Kal-El's escape ship broke free during the trip, or that part of the ship was expendable like the stages on our own spacecraft. Or that fragments of Krypton were somehow induced to follow his ship's path. That would be one explanation for any part of Krypton reaching Earth in any man's lifetime. (Unless, of course, Kal-El traveled at sub-light speeds all the way in some sort of suspended animation).

One small piece, however, would be enough to trigger a mental panic

effect in Kal-El that would scar him for life. Later, any similar glowing rock would tend to produce an echo of that first shock. The first traumatic contact would be founded on actual psychic shock, while the rest would be reflections in a para-normal mind.



The key to the man: his mind.

We have evidence that Kal-El possesses a stronger, brighter mind than the average Earthman, and controls a science and technology far in advance of ours.

His Fortress of Solitude seems full of advanced wonders and artifacts, from the few reports gleaned about it. He seems to understand any Earthly device he comes in contact with, and has dealt with many alien artifacts with the same facility.

Does all this mean that he is mentally to us as we are to the apes?

Not necessarily. It is certain his homeworld possessed science far in advance of ours. We are now on the threshold of being able to implant information directly into the human mind. Kryptonians were probably quite proficient at this. Kal-El may have had whole libraries of advanced scientific data and engineering techniques implanted in his mind before he left Krypton, or it may have been implanted directly, mentally, at birth, in much the same way as Heinlein's Martians in *Stranger in a Strange Land*, as part of their evolutionary process. As he grew on Earth and his mind matured, he would have come into more and more complete and effective control of this data to use to his own ends. While he would have this raw data inherent in his mind, he would still have to grow and mature mentally in order to be able to use it, as did Heinlein's Martian Earthchild.

Why does Kal-El encourage the

incorrect assessment of his capabilities? By remaining silent, he is countering the erroneous explanations foisted off on the public by the media. He is aiding in the misinformation. Why?

Probably because he grew to mature sensitivity amongst us, seeing how people react to the unusual and bizarre. He learned our reaction to that which we do not understand: fear.

Man fears the alien and unknown, and would react to an alien of incredible mental powers with sheer panic. A man who can move mountains or statues with a gesture or touch of his hand would tend to frighten people. A man far beyond us in certain phases of evolution would be regarded as a freak or monster and destroyed if possible or shunned if not.

Unless he came as a helpful benefactor. Unless he appeared as merely a stronger, faster, nobler version of normal man. Strength we can understand. A man pulling a car is wonderful: his strength is something to work for, to attempt to attain, it is merely the norm extended a bit. It is something normal and understandable.

But a man who merely gestures and causes a car to move, or a weight to float, that is mysterious. That tends to terrify the ape in all of us. It is not merely a slight extension of normal abilities. It breeds fear.

The same applies to the other powers of Kal-El. If people see them as merely an extension of what they can do, they might be envious, but not especially fearful. If a man can blow out a candle, why can't a stronger man blow out a forest fire? It is just the familiar writ large, and therefore less frightening.

Perhaps this is the greatest power of the Man of Steel: the power to understand our weaknesses and fears. He has powers he can no more ignore than we can ignore sight or hearing; he must use them, so he uses them in a way that is approved of by most of the world: helping others.

He is accepted by most of the world as a friend. He is not totally alone. He can pass as a normal man amongst us most of the time, but also can be larger than life when needed. And perhaps he can also work off the subconscious debt he may feel that he owes, that of living while his world is dead. He works, then, for the good of this world.

We are indeed fortunate that he was raised to think well of us. ■

Kirk Alyn

(Continued from page 59)

budget. They went way over budget. But, they did get the important parts of the second one with the people they won't have to call back.

FF: From the photos I've seen, it seems they've deviated from the original story of Superman.



Kirk Alyn and Tommy Bond (playing Jimmy Olsen) watch Noel Neill (as Lois Lane) powder her nose. Hats off to the lady, gents.

ALYN: Yes, they tell me there are four different origin stories on Superman, which I didn't know because I didn't follow it that much in the comic strip. Now, the only difference I can read in the script is that when Superman comes to Earth, he is three years old. It takes him three years to get here, so when he gets out of the rocket he is already three years old. They don't destroy the rocket like they did in mine. In mine they had to destroy it, so there's no more talk about it. Nobody could say, "Whatever happened to the rocket" because they could see it get destroyed. They take it and put it in the barn. After a few years, when the kid is grown up, he looks through and with his X-ray eyes sees this little light blinking inside the rocket. So, he dives in, brings this little bit of an instrument out, and his father talks to him. Now, he goes up to the North Pole, and builds the Fortress of Solitude. Now, every so often, he goes up to this Fortress of Solitude and his father talks to him in a vision. It's very interesting and beautifully written. And, it's plausible and believ-

able. It's got human interest. You can see this guy is human. If he plays it well, it's going to be a hell of a picture. **FF:** Did you do a lot of promotion for Superman?
ALYN: No, not at all. Not once. I wasn't allowed to tell anyone that I was Superman. I wasn't allowed to be seen on the lot in my uniform. I had to wear a robe, or take it off. I could tell people that I'm Clark Kent, but not Superman.

However, that came in very handy for me when I did the second one. We had an argument about money. I was mad as hell and couldn't care less if I did another one or not because I was typed. So, I asked a hell of a lot of money. They said, "How much money do you want?" I said, "I want twice as much money as you paid me the first time." I figured that was a lot. So, he said, "Fat chance. If that's how you feel about it, we'll just do *The Son of Superman*." I said, "Fine. Do *The Son of Superman*, and tell the kids where the son came from, see. In the meantime, do you know what I'm going to do, Sam? I'm going out and make personal appearances as Superman." He said, "Aha, you can't do that. It's in your contract. You can't tell anyone that you're Superman." I said, "Sam, I don't have to." I said, "You did it already. You billed me as 'Superman as Superman' and I've got stills to prove it." He looked at me and said, "You son of a bitch. Write him another contract." And I got it. He wasn't really mad at me, but he didn't realize he worked himself into a corner. And I

had no agent, so I talked to him myself.

FF: Superman is such a popular character, why spend so much money on big names like Brando for the film.
ALYN: They used Marlon Brando and various other people because if you don't have a big name, you can't go the bank and say to them, "Loan me half a million dollars." The guy is going to say to you, "Well, who do you have in the picture to guarantee the return? Do you have a big box office name?" This is what happened with them. They went to get the money and they said, "Well, you haven't got a box office name." These bankers don't know whether Superman is a big name or not. Superman alone will draw them in, not Marlon Brando. So, they needed a big name. They couldn't use a big name for Superman. You have to get an unknown. "We saw him in so-and-so, and now look at him doing this." It will make him unbelievable. You have to get an unknown in order to believe in him.
FF: In an interview in *Reporter's Annual*, producer Ilya Salkind says much the same thing. They were having all kinds of trouble, and then they signed Brando. The next day they signed Hackman and some of the other big stars. They all fell into place after Brando signed. So, it was worth it to them to pay Brando so much money.

ALYN: Also they could then borrow another ten million. But, I think Superman alone, without any big names at all, will be the draw. They will make their money back. Forty-four million sounds like a lot of money. *Star Wars* made one hundred sixty million before any foreign release.
FF: Do you think it's going to be a blockbuster?

ALYN: It's got to be. I've been to an awful lot of conventions, all over the country. The talk there is "Do you think they'll make another Superman." Believe me, they never even mentioned George Reeves.
FF: Superman is not supposed to die.
ALYN: Yes, that hurt a little bit. But, even in his TV scripts, for 90% of the time that he was on the screen, he did nothing but talk, talk, talk. He was Clark Kent. Then, at the very end, he'd do something as Superman. They spent a little more money on my serials, and 90% of the time I was on the screen, and I did four, five or six tremendous stunts. I held up a bridge. I stopped trains. You see, I was Superman. ■

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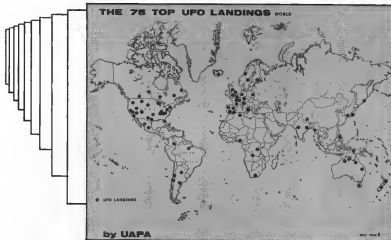
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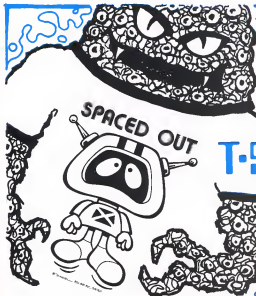
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